

## LIONEL'S ADVENTURES.

BY ANNA MASON.

"Now, Lionel, remember! let no one know that I have returned. For this evening, at least, I am *not at home*, even to my dearest friends."

"All right, Sissy—ta, ta! But if I should happen to meet Joe, my dear?"

"Of all others, do not let *him* know that I am back! Why, he would come tearing up here at once. *Positively*, Lionel, I do not wish to see *any one*; my brains are all in a muddle; my eyes look like peeled onions; my nose is as red as fire—a 'wee modest crimson-tipped flower'—and I am just wretched. In short, sir, I have that most wretched of all complaints, a cold in my head.

"Cold in the head!

What can be said

Stupider, uglier, more illbred?"

"It's a' o' that, sister mine. If you are feeling so miserably, I had better not go out; my conscience will reproach me for leaving you alone. I've half a mind—"

"And half of your mind is a rare intellectual endowment," interrupted Miss Nelly, saucily; "so never mind about the other half. No, go, Lionel!" with an airy gesture of dismissal. "I do not want you at home; my programme is all made out for the evening, and your presence would only prove a hindrance. I mean to drink a glass of *lager bier*. Miss Smith says it's a sure cure, and—"

"Say your prayers and go to bed? If so, you had better say your prayers first, or you will forget all about them."

"For shame, Lionel!"

"Seriously, Sis, I'm shocked at you."

"Well, it's of no consequence if you are. Go, now, and *pax vobiscum*; but don't meet Joe, nor any of that set, if you can help it. Should you stumble across them, however, make it appear that I am still at Ocean Grove."

"Would you have me mendacious?"

"Of course not; only use tact, Jesuitical subterfuge, or something of the sort. I am determined not to be intruded upon this evening. I have an impression that the *lager* will either kill or cure me; and I

mean to loll down on the sofa and snooze until your return."

Notwithstanding her description of herself, Nelly Jones was a very pretty girl. As her brother Lionel took up his hat and cane and sauntered out, she proceeded to carry out her programme to the letter. She stirred the grate fire to a brighter lustre, and rolled the sofa up toward it; then she drank the beer with many a grimace over its bitter flatness; after that she lowered the gaslight to a mere spark, wrapped a gayly-colored afghan about her shoulders, and deposited the burden of her beauty upon the sofa. She was quickly wooed by sleep—"the innocent sleep," as Shakspeare so prettily has it.

The front of the house was as dark as an Egyptian tomb, and gave as little hint of being inhabited. No one knew of her arrival in town, so she believed herself to be tolerably secure from interruption. Only one of her three servants had as yet returned to her, and she had received permission from her young mistress to absent herself for the evening. Miss Nelly was absolutely alone in the house save for the presence of Wee Willie Winkle, the terrier asleep beside her. Some sense of responsibility in the care of the house must have weighed upon the poor brute's mind, however, for he opened first one sleepy eye, then the other, to regard alternately the glowing fire or his sleeping mistress, whose gentle breathing had deepened into what we might denominate a snore, were it not sacrilege to use such a word in connection with a seraphic, beatific, fairy-like creature such as Miss Nelly was held to be by her numerous admirers.

While this gentle angel lapsed into dream-land, that gay Lothario, her brother, pursued his eager way, gazing about him to observe how his absence had been endured by his native town. Apparently with philosophy, for everything looked remarkably gay and festive. Washington Hall was one blaze of light, and a charity fair in active progress. Lionel Percy Jones—such was his full name—two baptisms and the distinguished patronymic—drew up somewhat

abruptly, and, as fate would have it, ran directly against Harry Fane and Joe Ashland.

The first instinct of depraved human nature led them to scowl threateningly upon their clumsy rencounterer, but the moment recognition occurred their countenances glowed in ardent welcome, and they received him with open arms.

"Why, Lionel Percy! is it you at last, old boy?" exclaimed Joe, in excitement, natural enough, for he was desperately in love with Miss Nelly at the time. "When did you get back—eh?"

"Only arrived to-day."

"And Miss Nelly is with you, of course. Now I'll be hanged if I won't go right up to the house, engagements or no engagements—"

"She's not with me, Joe; I've left her behind," stammered Lionel, flattering himself that he was accomplishing a notable prevarication without actually descending to the meanness of fibbing. Unused to falsehood, however, his manner betrayed him, and the fact is not to his discredit.

"Do you mean that she is still at Ocean Grove?" asked Joe, regarding him keenly.

"What else should I mean?"

"Lionel is quizzing," interposed Harry, quietly. "He has left Miss Nelly at the house."

"I have not!" asserted Lionel, crossly. Of course he hadn't meant to lie outright, but "the fellows" had driven him into a corner where he had "achieved a neat and frosty falsehood" almost before he knew it.

"If she is at Ocean Grove, we'll all go down to-morrow and bring her home," remarked Joe, with an expression of doubt.

"In the meantime, Lionel, come in with us; we've promised some of the P. G's. (i.e., pretty girls) to attend the fair this evening," said Harry.

Our hero soon forgot his annoyance, for the scene in which he quickly found himself was animated in the extreme, and he met crowds of young ladies of his own and his friends' acquaintance. The merry laughing creatures were *pro tempore* as importunate and extortionate as Jews, and kept our young gentlemen lively and occupied.

"This thing is getting monotonous," whispered Joe. "Harry hasn't a cent left, and I am nearly fleeced. Let us go."

"All right!" asserted Lionel. And the three friends made good their escape before

the pretty girl acting as postmistress could intercept their flight, and make them understand that there were some twenty letters in the office addressed to them awaiting redemption at the rate of fifty cents each.

"So you are keeping bachelor's hall, are you?" queried Joe, as he paused under a lamppost to light a cigar.

"Just so."

"Then I'll tell you what we'll do. Harry and I will go home with you."

"Excuse me to-night, boys," faltered Lionel.

But the more Lionel persisted he didn't want their company the more mischievous they became and the more bent upon going home with him.

He was meditating the propriety of confessing the truth and informing them that Nelly had requested him not to bring any one home with him, when they ran against a crowd formed about a drunken man being led to durance vile. In a moment Lionel had seized the opportunity and disappeared around a corner. He made a long *detour* and came around to his own street in an opposite direction, chuckling over his cuteness in having got the better of "the boys." He hastened his footsteps, and approached the familiar doorsteps, when, lo! what to his wondering eyes did appear but Harry Fane and Joe Ashland sitting like monuments of patience and determination, smoking their cigars and awaiting him?

For a moment Jones was nonplussed; but no! things had gone too far; the boys should not get the better of him now; he would get in another way, and they might sit there and wait until they got tired of it.

Blank Street ran parallel, and he knew a fellow named Briggs who lived on Blank Street in one of a row of narrow houses whose yards adjoined his own. He would state to Briggs that he was locked out, and ask permission to go through his house to the yard and climb the fence. Trust him to get the better of the boys every time!

In two minutes he had reached Blank Street, and was standing before Briggs's house. With nervous haste he rang the bell, there was a long, long delay, and then Briggs appeared, a shawl thrown over his shoulders, his bare feet thrust into slippers, and a guttering candle held in one hand. The pale yellow light fell directly upon Lionel's face and rendered him distinctly visible, while he could see Briggs but dimly.

Somewhat stammeringly Jones explained himself and expressed his request, while Briggs listened in haughty and most portentous silence. Sympathy and amenity were lacking from his manner. Lionel tried to explain further, but the irresponsible manner of Briggs acted as a wet blanket in extinguishing his naturally shining conversational talents.

"The fool evidently thinks I'm drunk," soliloquized the discomfited Jones, as, with a crestfallen air, he followed his surly conductor down the basement stairs, through the kitchen to the yard.

"Who is it, Charley?" called a feminine voice from the upper regions.

"No one in particular!" shouted back the disagreeable Briggs.

"I am very sorry to have made you so much trouble," remarked Lionel, politely, as he prepared to climb the fence. "I am very much obliged to you for your kindness, I'm sure. I did not like to rouse our folks, you know, and as I am slightly acquainted with you—"

"I have no acquaintance with you, sir," was the unequivocal and insulting reply.

"Impudent, disagreeable fellow!" Jones thought. "He imagines I've been on a spree, and he means to mark his disapproval—conceited prig!"

He could see that Briggs continued to watch him, for when he looked back the spark of the candle glared at him like a little red angry eye through the darkness.

He was over the fence at last, and upon the new grape-rack that occupied the rear of his own yard. It did not take him long to scramble over that and descend, with a sigh of relief, into his own premises. He could see a dim light through the dark holland shades of the parlor, so, of course, Nelly was still up, and his troubles over.

In the meantime, Joe and Harry had argued the question as to whether it were possible that Lionel could have got ahead of them and entered the house prior to their arrival there.

"It hardly seems possible," had been Joe's decision. "If he is in, it can do no harm to ring; and if he's not, and the house is really empty, it certainly can do no harm; so here goes, at all events! If nothing comes of it, we can sit on the steps a while longer and wait for Lionel."

The peal he rang roused Miss Nelly from her slumbers, and, naturally concluding

that Bridget had returned, she started for the door, her cheeks flushed with the fire-light, her eyes very sleepy, and the gay afghan still wrapped about her shoulders. Wee Willie Winkle followed with a growl that deepened into an ear-splitting bark, as Nelly threw open the door and uttered a purely feminine scream upon beholding Harry and Joe.

Greetings, explanations, apologies and laughter followed in quick succession, and poor Nelly, quickly recovering her good-humor, invited her unexpected guests into the dimly-lighted parlor. She was meditating a brief escape to her own apartment, with the idea of making herself a little more presentable, when a terrible noise was heard from the lower regions, some one violently shaking the basement casement; for Lionel thought, "Of course Nelly will know no burglar would make such a racket." But poor Nelly was not cool enough to reason about it. What she did was to cling closer to Joe, while murmuring that if it had not been for his opportune arrival she should have been murdered by burglars. Of course Joe reassured her, and instinctively drew her to him, while Harry stepped to the chandelier to turn the gas up more brightly. Unfortunately he turned it out instead, and as the fire had died out, the room was now quite dark.

In the stillness there was a slight sibilant sound, of which Harry wisely took no notice; then the noise at the basement window recommenced.

"There are candle and matches on the safe," gasped Nelly.

Harry struck a light, and the procession, headed by Wee Willie Winkle, started for the culinary department.

Meanwhile, Lionel had become tired of banging at the casement; accordingly he broke a pane of glass with true manly impatience, and sprang into the kitchen, to be pinned by the leg by his own dog, who did not wait for recognitions. Nelly fell fainting into Joe's arms; Harry bravely confronted the supposed burglar with a pistol held erect, and a dripping candle pointed at his breast threateningly. The situation was very tragical indeed.

"By Jove!" ejaculated Ashland, suddenly.

Harry restored his candle to its normal position, regarded his pistol sheepishly, and burst into laughter. Miss Nelly re-

covered immediately, and jerked herself out of Joe's protecting arms with a very red face, as she gasped out:

"You certainly are intoxicated, Lionel Percy Jones! O for shame! Alas, that I should have lived to see this day! You'll break my heart!"—*et cetera*.

"What on earth has happened to you, Jones? Look at your clothes!" recommenced Joe.

Lionel glanced ruefully down. Of course he never could have imagined that his very energetic sister would have a fresh coat of white paint put on the fence and grape-rack the very first day of their return to town.

"The fence and the rack looked so nice!" lamented Nelly; "and now you've rubbed the fresh paint all off."

"Very well, a fresh coat of paint will make that all right. But look at me. No cleaner on the face of the earth could ever restore my clothes to their normal condition. I shall have to have a new coat altogether, to say nothing of pantaloons."

Scolding, hysterics, laughter, all followed, and Miss Nelly brewed a hot punch, over whose fragrant ingredients "the boys" vowed never to betray Lionel; and at last Miss Nelly turned the key on a quiet house.

All might have gone well had not Lionel troubled himself about the opinion of Briggs. They had once known each other quite well, and it was only too evident that Briggs must have regarded him, Lionel Percy Jones, as grossly intoxicated on that memorable evening, to have so decidedly and insultingly ignored the acquaintance existing between them. Lionel felt that he must call upon Briggs, and have a satisfactory explanation of the whole affair.

About this time he made the acquaintance of a merry mischievous young lady, Miss Chatty Hearsay by name, who introduced him to her three sisters, as roguish and feather-brained as herself. They were one and all exceedingly fond of a joke, and retailed gossip in a way dangerous if it had not been singularly free from malice. They were simply given to a tittle-tattle, harmless, and often spicy. The very head and front of their offending had been to this extent, no more.

The place of their abode was a narrow domicile next door to Briggs.

Taking leave of Miss Chatty on one occasion, Lionel was asked to spend the following Thursday evening at her home. He

readily accepted the invitation to be present.

"There are a few friends coming in," further explained Miss Chatty. "The Du Bois of Dash Street, the Bakers, whom you have met, and our next door neighbor, the Briggses. A quiet little affair, you understand; just music and euchre. Pray invite your sister to accompany you."

"Thanks! but I can't come," faltered Lionel. "I don't wish to meet Briggs—that is, I cannot make up my mind to do so until I have had a little explanation with him. But I may as well make you my *confidante*, Miss Chatty, and ask your advice."

Here Lionel drew nearer to Miss Chatty on the sofa, and the cushion which had been erected as a barrier between them, a votive offering to *les convenances*, was quietly displaced, while Lionel's tones sank into the confidential.

Alas! poor innocent Lionel had very little idea of the frailty of woman's tongue in those happy days, before bitter experience had rendered him cynical and suspicious, or he never would have given himself away in such fashion!

Having bound the young lady by a promise of secrecy, he proceeded to recount his adventures, while she listened in decorous and well-expressed glee till he reached the point of his entrance through Briggs's yard; then she burst into irrepressible laughter.

Poor Jones was obliged to join in the cackinnation. When she recovered breath enough she gasped out:

"It wasn't Briggs's yard at all; it was ours!"

"Impossible! Then I am completely sold! You could knock me down with a feather!"

"My brother Charley let you in."

"You amaze me! I could have sworn it was Briggs! So it was you who called down, Miss Chatty?"

"Of course I did; and I always believed that Charley had admitted a drunken burglar into our neighbor's yard. It was my theory that the wretch had robbed the basement and been captured by the police, for we heard a terrible commotion over there."

"Now don't repeat what I have told you to your sisters, Miss Chatty," pleaded Lionel, earnestly; "nor to any one else. Remember! I have your promise."

"And I shall keep it, never fear. The girls shall never hear it from my lips!"

And so far she kept her promise. When she returned to her sisters' presence, however, she looked so roguish, that Gab (diminutive for Gabrielle) exclaimed:

"You've heard something funny, now haven't you, Chatty?—and you're just dying to tell it."

"The best joke!" admitted Miss Chatty, with dancing eyes and emphatic dimples. 'I have promised not to tell, however, and I won't."

In vain the girls coaxed and pleaded, threatened and scolded; Miss Chatty would not so much as inform them whom the joke concerned: a degree of reticence which would scarcely have been credited in the neighborhood where the volatile young ladies had respectively won the sobriquets of "The Morning Express," "The Evening News," "The Daily Budget," and "The Graphic."

Notwithstanding Miss Chatty's refusal to unburden herself to her sisters, however, it was not a week before Fane and Ashland were putting such questions as these to Jones:

"You are quite certain that you know which of those narrow houses belongs to Briggs, are you not, Lionel?" or, "Have you ever noticed the similarity between the voices of Mrs. Briggs and your friend Miss Hearsay, Jones?" or, with anxious solicitude, "Aren't you afraid that your aberrations on the evening that shall be nameless may injure your prospects in a certain quarter?" And when Lionel's naturally sweet temper would become slightly ruffled under such provocation, Harry would sigh forth, "'The way of the transgressor is hard,' Percy!" and Joe would add:

—" 'What a tangled web we weave  
When first we practise to deceive.' "

In short, Lionel's adventures were told all around town. And Miss Chatty was not to be blamed too harshly. She kept the story to herself until threatened with an attack of brain fever from over-repression. The story would then be told in her unconscious ravings, so she averted such a catastrophe by seeking an escape-valve. She found it in the bosom of her particular friend, Miss Silly Feathertop, who swore by all a school-girl holds sacred, that there it should remain, hermetically sealed.

Miss Feathertop was a young lady possessed of considerable dramatic ability. She

could recount in a most realistic manner. A good story never lost in the telling by coming through her rosy lips. Gesture, grimace and mimicry lent pungency. She might have made a fortune by the histrionic art had she chosen to have gone upon the stage. Also she had a reputation for wit and brilliancy that must be kept up. Furthermore, she possessed a beau, a betrothed lover. He called on her when Chatty's account was quite fresh upon her mind, and, as fate would have it, he was in a teasing, disagreeable mood. He attempted to arouse Miss Feathertop's jealousy by his praises of a certain Miss Carp; she was the most entertaining girl he had ever met, he asserted. This was too much! It made Miss Feathertop feel that she must crush the mocking spirit out of Tom forever; she must surpass and outshine the aspiring Miss Carp, and thus compel Tom to admit her superiority.

With no sign of pique, she began the task of entertaining the thick-headed aspirant for her hand. To be sure, he was heavy material, but the play of light artillery began to tell on his obstinate front. It was impossible not to thaw somewhat before her brightness, sparkle and fun. Miss Chatty's ideas were becoming exhausted, when she suddenly remembered that if there was a person on earth that Tom detested, it was Lionel Percy Jones. Of course, then, he would relish a joke at poor Jones's expense. Swallowing the compunctious pang the recollection of her promise gave her, Miss Feathertop proceeded to swear him in.

"Now, Tom, will you promise solemnly never to tell if I repeat to you a good joke on Percy Jones?"

"I vow to be mum as the grave!" declared he, with upraised hand.

Alas! the wicked and mendacious youth had no regard for a promise. Ere the night had passed, he had retold the story again and again, with innumerable additions and embellishments of his own. The next day Ashland heard it and repeated it to Fane. Now Jones hears it *everywhere*, and is entirely sick of it. He says that there is scarcely a word of truth in the story as it has come to be told; furthermore, he threatens to resign from his club if he hears any more about it there. And then he adds, that he sees nothing so very ridiculous in it, after all; it only shows at what mere nothings silly folks will laugh.

## LUNACY AND LOVE.

BY BELLE WATERLOO.

TINKLE, tinkle, tinkle went the sleigh-bells; glide up, glide down, glide over, went the sleigh after them. In the sleigh sat Cornelia Allanby and her grandfather. Neither spoke for a long time, except that the grandfather at short intervals admonished his horses by a quick-spoken "Come, come; come, come; get up; get up!" Not that the horses needed this urging, for they trotted along as if propelled by steam. But grandfather liked to seem as if he were making a great stir and doing a great deal. He was probably thinking of the days of his vigorous manhood, when this was a reality instead of a seeming. Cornelia was thinking of the future, wondering whether her life would ever be varied by a real romance, by some weird experience. So far her life appeared very much like the road she was travelling. It had had its ups and downs, but they had been smoothed over by kindness even as the road was smoothed over by snow; and pleasure had lent its charms, sweet as the voice of bells. She was tired of its monotony. Ah, Cornelia, you do not know that this quiet country road is leading you to experiences as fantastic as those of which you dream! Cornelia's reveries are at length broken by her grandfather saying:

"Well, Corny, here we are at home."

She is then welcomed by warm kisses from her grandmother, and is promised an extra good visit. The days pass pleasantly by in making and receiving visits. One evening she accompanied her cousins to the school-house to practise for an exhibition. Among the people there Cornelia recognized Mrs. Gray, a good motherly old lady and a warm friend of Cornelia. Before Mrs. Gray observed her, Cornelia stole to the back of her chair, and placing her hands over Mrs. Gray's eyes, she kissed her, at the same saying:

"Guess who it is?"

"I guess, from the voice, it is Cornelia Allanby," said Mrs. Gray. "But, my dear, when did you come?" she asked, drawing Cornelia to a seat by her side.

"O, several days ago. Didn't Mr. Gray tell you? I am going to your house to-night to stay all night."

"No; Hubert always forgets to tell us any news. I'm real glad you are coming to see us." Then lowering her voice, "We have a crazy man staying with us, but I hope it will make no difference about your coming home with us."

"A crazy man!" said Cornelia. "How did a crazy man come to be at your house?"

"I cannot tell you now, but I will after we get home. I think he will go away with Hubert early in the morning, so you may not even see him."

The conversation was ended here by some one coming for Cornelia. After the evening's performance was over the different participants started for their various homes, Cornelia accompanying Mrs. Gray, her son Hubert, and his daughter Lizzie—three generations. They rode along merrily, commenting on the abilities of the various actors, picking up a neighbor here and there, and giving them a lift homeward on their journey. When they reached Mr. Gray's, Mrs. Gray met them at the door, and hurried them into the warm sitting-room. As Cornelia went in a young man rose from the sofa and hastily left the room.

"Who was that?" asked Cornelia, turning to Mrs. Gray.

"That is the crazy man I was speaking to you about," replied Mrs. Gray.

Then followed the story, told by Mr. Gray, who just then came in with his son Johnny. The young man's name was Alfred Ellinwood; he was the son of a grain merchant in Montreal. They were doing a prosperous business together, the father and son, when the latter was taken dangerously sick with a fever. During his illness the firm failed and lost nearly all their fortune, there being but a few hundreds of dollars left after the debts were paid. The son was scarcely convalescent when this depressing news was told him, and it proved more than he could bear; for he became a partial monomaniac on the subject of his losses. He improved slowly in health, and at length his father, thinking he had sufficiently recovered, advised him to visit the West and endeavor to find some new business opening, believing that a change of scene would completely restore his mental

health. Young Mr. Ellinwood agreed to this plan, and set out for "the States," where he had some friends and business acquaintances. He visited Detroit, Cincinnati, Chicago, and several other large cities, but finding no satisfactory opening in either of those places, he finally reached the little city of Port Huron, in the eastern part of Michigan, where he stopped for a while. Here his mental depression became deeper than ever, and it was here that Mr. Gray met him. Becoming acquainted with young Ellinwood's history, and sympathizing with his state of mind, Mr. Gray invited him, although a stranger, to go home with him and stay a while, believing the quiet of his country home might have a soothing influence on the young stranger's disturbed mind. Mr. Ellinwood accepted the kind invitation, and staid several weeks at the home of his new friends. At the end of that time, feeling very much better both in health and spirits, he declined the offer of Mr. Gray to secure him a position as book-keeper in a neighboring village, thinking he could do better to return to Montreal. When he reached home he found that his father had recommenced his old business on a small capital, but was feeling discouraged and disappointed. He had hoped that Alfred, during his Western trip, would find not only an opening for himself but for both. They had a quarrel, and Alfred, not knowing what to do at the time, returned to Mr. Gray's till he could form some plan for the future. And this was how he happened to be at Mr. Gray's when Cornelia came there. The next morning Cornelia was awakened by hearing Mr. Gray call:

"Alfred! Alfred! are you ready to go to Port Huron?"

A pleasant but sleepy voice replied:

"I don't know whether to go or not."

"Well, do as you like," came back the answer, fresh and cheery.

Cornelia then heard Mr. Gray drive off, the jingle of the bells dying in the distance and lulling her to sleep with their undulating music. Just before entering dream-land she was half conscious of a vague fear lest Mr. Ellinwood should do some awful thing in a sudden fit of lunacy. But her fears were imaginary, for she was undisturbed till the ringing of the breakfast-bell. When she went down stairs old Mrs. Gray told her that Lizzie was in the sitting-room and would introduce Mr. Ellinwood to her.

She entered the room where they were, and there, before the fire in an easy-chair, sat a handsome young man of twenty-five; his face was rather pale, but not at all wasted; his eyes were dark and sorrowful-looking, yet pleasant; while his dark brown mustache and side whiskers increased the paleness of his face. In his lap sat a large maltese cat, which he listlessly stroked while looking into the fire. As Cornelia entered the room Mr. Ellinwood looked up, and Lizzie introduced him. He rose, and, bowing, placed Cornelia a chair, then resumed his own seat in silence. The cat jumped into his lap again, and he stroked its soft fur and seemed oblivious to the presence of any one. In a few minutes they went to breakfast. Mrs. Gray asked her guests to make themselves at home, and to help themselves to whatever they preferred. Mr. Ellinwood did so, but presently, noticing Cornelia's hesitancy in doing the same, he politely waited on her during the remainder of the meal. Pleasant talk went round between Cornelia and the family, till finally the exhibition of the coming evening was spoken of. Old Mrs. Gray then said:

"Alfred, you ought to go to the exhibition; it would do you good. I enjoyed the rehearsals last night real well."

"No, no!" answered Alfred; "I should not enjoy it; it would only remind me of happier times that are past."

Cornelia, seeing his looks of despondency, said:

"O Mr. Ellinwood! you ought certainly to go; we are going to have grand times, tableaux, charades, music, and then Edwin Shanno is going to sing such a comical song, and will come out in such a ridiculous costume; it will be well worth seeing."

Mr. Ellinwood smiled faintly and said:

"Perhaps I will go if it is to be so very entertaining;" and did not speak again during the meal.

After breakfast Cornelia found herself alone with Mr. Ellinwood, the rest of the household being engaged in various duties. She sat by the fire reading, while he occupied the sofa, leaning upon his arm, with his head resting on his hand, and apparently lost in thought. Cornelia glanced at him once in a while, and wondered what he was thinking about. Presently he rose from the sofa and began walking the room back and forth rapidly, as if deeply agi-

tated. Cornelia then rose and went to one of the windows. It opened toward the barn, and looking out, she saw Ike, the "hired man," conducting a colt through a number of quite remarkable feats that he had trained it to perform. She called Mr. Ellinwood's attention to the equine exhibition. He came and stood by her side and looked out of the window. They then began to talk about the colt's performance, and also the grotesque appearance of Ike, and thus flitted from one subject to another, till Mr. Ellinwood spoke of his home in Montreal.

"Do you like Canada better than the United States?" asked Cornelia.

"I like Montreal so well that I wish I had never left there," he answered, gloomily.

"Perhaps you've not seen this country under favorable circumstances; I'm sure you will like it after you have become better acquainted with it," said Cornelia.

"Favorable circumstances," he said, bitterly; "not very! I left home when I was so weak from recent illness that I could hardly stand. Travelling and change of climate improved my health, but disappointment in business kept me in such a state of mental depression that I scarcely knew what I was about. My nights were passed in hideous dreams and nightmares. One morning, after an unusually miserable night, I left my boarding-place before breakfast, and wandered aimlessly down the street, till I came to a small boarding-house in the suburbs of the town. The proprietor stood outside, and seeing that I was tired and cold, asked me if I would come in and rest. I said 'Yes; I will rest and have some breakfast.' But a sorry rest it proved. After breakfast I went into the barroom, where I found half a dozen rough-looking men smoking and talking as if their lives depended on these two operations. They asked me to smoke and I complied, although it was a habit to which I was unaccustomed, and I smoked until the room swam and I grew so faint and sick that I was forced to go to bed. I did not leave my bed for several days. I had just become well enough to be up and walk around a little when I met Mr. Gray. He learned something of my history, and invited me home with him, and has proved a good friend. You see my sojourn in the States has been a failure and a disgrace."

This short history he had told to Cornelia

while pacing the room to and fro. When he had finished, Cornelia said to him:

"Do not judge yourself too harshly; you may yet do well here."

"I think not; I utterly despair," he said.

Then he went to a small table that stood in the room, and taking up a pen, placed on its point a small piece of white cotton, and opening the stove door, held it in the flames till it was scorched to cinders. He then approached Cornelia, and holding it up before her, said:

"Can you restore that?"

"No," she answered, in wonderment; "but what of it?"

"Well," he replied, "I am like that; I have been scorched; my strength has been consumed."

"O no, Mr. Ellinwood, do not compare yourself with that; your strength and hopes may be gone, for a time, but the source whence they came still remains."

"Where is the source from which I can get my hopes and vigor, and all that I have lost?" he asked, impatiently.

"From the 'Father of lights, from whence cometh every good and perfect gift,'" answered Cornelia, reverently.

"You think so? I think a person may be ever so pious, and yet not be happy unless he has a moderate amount of money. The love of money may be the root of all evil, but a thorough appreciation of the comforts money procures is inherent to mankind, and, I think, no evil."

"It will procure many blessings, it is true," said Cornelia, "but not the greatest of all blessings, a pure conscience before God."

Old Mrs. Gray then interrupted their conversation by coming in and saying that Ike was ready with the sleigh to take them to the schoolhouse. Turning to Mr. Ellinwood, she said:

"Alfred, you had better go, too; you would enjoy the ride."

"O yes, Mr. Ellinwood," added Cornelia, "there is nothing that serves better as a tonic than a sleighride on a frosty morning like this."

He hesitated a moment, and then said:

"Well, I will take your prescription this time, Miss Allanby, but if it fails I shall lose faith in you as a physician."

"I will stand the test," returned Cornelia, as she left the room to prepare for her ride.



When she came back she found Mr. Ellinwood in a half-reclining position on the sofa, equipped in overcoat, sealskin cap and gloves. The cap was very becoming, and a heavy dark blue scarf tied loosely round his throat gave a careless grace to his appearance. He was looking out of the window, and seemed indifferent to all around him. As Cornelia looked at him she became conscious of such a deep feeling of sympathetic pity for his state of mind, that she was startled lest it should merge into that feeling to which pity is said to be akin. Her train of thought was changed by Mrs. Gray saying:

"I should not think you would need to practise much more, Cornelia. I think they all did their parts well last night. I enjoy any such thing quite as well as if I were young."

"I think that is the right way; when I get to be old, I intend to feel young," said Cornelia.

"You'll never live to be old," came in short quick tones from Mr. Ellinwood.

"How do you know?" asked Cornelia, in the same kind of impatient voice.

"I can see it in your face," he replied.

"If your prophecy prove true, I shall be spared the pain and trouble of living," she answered, merrily.

Cornelia was pale-faced and rather fragile-looking, but her health was always good, and these ominous words, instead of causing any nervousness, were received with laughing incredulity. The jingle of bells at the door called them to their places in the sleigh, Cornelia and Lizzie behind, Mr. Ellinwood and Ike in front. Mr. Ellinwood drove, and as he took the lines he turned and said in a low voice:

"Aren't you afraid to trust yourself to a lunatic driver, Miss Allanby?"

"Not in the least," she replied, looking at him so calmly and steadily that she seemed to impart some of her calmness to his impatient unrest.

A nearly silent ride of twenty minutes brought them to the schoolhouse. Mr. Ellinwood assisted Lizzie from the sleigh, and then lifted Cornelia out, at the same time saying:

"You have done me good, Miss Allanby; you have proved yourself to be a good physician."

"I am glad you think so," returned Cornelia.

"I will say good-by," he continued, taking her hand.

"But you will come to the exhibition to-night?" questioned Cornelia.

"Perhaps; I cannot tell. Good-by!"

"Good-by!" she said; and entered the gate as he slowly drove away.

All the morning Cornelia was haunted by thoughts of Mr. Ellinwood, his looks, his manner, his words—"You have done me good, Miss Allanby." She was interested in him, and hoped she would meet him again in the evening; was even tempted to write a note telling him to come and not to feel so gloomy. Then she blushed at the thought of being so bold, and wondered if she were guilty of falling in love with a lunatic, and mentally laughed at the bare idea of such a thing. But notwithstanding all this cogitation, she soon after begged a leaf of blank paper from a friend, and with a pencil wrote the following note:

"MR. ELLINWOOD,—Please be sure and come to the exhibition to-night; I think you will like it. Don't give way to despair; put your trust in God, and all will be well with you. C. ALLANBY."

This note she gave to Lizzie, and charged her to give it to no one but Mr. Ellinwood. That day at dinner, when Cornelia's uncle asked her what she thought of the young man who was stopping at Mr. Gray's, she thought of the note she had written, and she could feel a hot blush steal over her face as she replied:

"I do not think he is really insane, but very despondent and discouraged."

She felt as if she must speak well of him, as if it were her duty.

"It may be that you are right, but I had an idea he was an impostor," said her practical cousin John.

"I do not think so," returned Cornelia, with much earnestness; "he appeared to me to be very much of a gentleman."

The following evening, at the exhibition, Cornelia watched for the arrival of the Grays with interest, wondering if Mr. Ellinwood would accompany them. But when they came without him, she felt vexed and chagrined, though she was somewhat soothed by the note Lizzie gave her from Mr. Ellinwood, regretting that he felt too gloomy and indisposed to be there, and thanking her for the kind little note she had sent him.

A few days afterwards, as Cornelia sat sewing, her cousin Fred came in and said:

"Well, Cornelia, I have been over to Mr. Gray's and have seen Mr. Ellinwood."

"Have you?" answered Cornelia, trying to speak in an indifferent voice, though she felt the presence of a treacherous blush, as she thought perhaps her cousin had found out all about the note she had written, and would think she had done something very improper.

"Yes," resumed her cousin, in a teasing way, "I saw Mr. Ellinwood, and I think he would like to see you."

"Like to see me! why do you think so?"

"O, because when I was introduced to him he hardly noticed me till Mrs. Gray told him I was your cousin, when he immediately became interested, and asked after your health, saying, 'Miss Allanby is a very amiable young lady.'"

"And just because he said that, you conclude he wants to see me. You took very short reasoning to come to that conclusion."

"Not at all, my dear; amiable means lovable, and if Mr. Ellinwood thinks you lovable, he naturally would like to have you with him; and I would further add that your mission is clear. You should become matron of an asylum—number of inmates not to exceed more than one handsome male lunatic, aged twenty-five."

"Yes," she answered, saucily, "I think I could manage any ordinary case of lunacy, after having such ample opportunities of studying the malady in its various phases, while visiting my crazy cousin Fred."

"Such insinuations are too much for me; you compel me to leave you," said Fred, with mock seriousness, as he left the room.

Shortly after this Cornelia went home, without again seeing Mr. Ellinwood. But somehow, she was not surprised when, in the course of a week or two, she received a short letter from him saying that his health was much better, and that he was going home to Montreal to go into business with his father again. He also thanked her for the kindness and sympathy she had shown him during their very brief intercourse, saying she had inspired him with hopes for the future, and asking, as a favor, the privilege of writing to her occasionally. In return he received a kindly little letter from Cornelia granting his request. Their correspondence was uninterrupted till late in the following summer, when Cornelia went

with her brother on a trip down the St. Lawrence. Her brother, who was a journalist, gathered a harvest of incidents and items for the newspaper, while she gathered a harvest of material for chatty home letters. It so happened that they spent a whole day in Montreal, and after they had visited several places of interest, Cornelia expressed a wish to visit a grain elevator, saying she would like to see one in operation; and at the same time mentioned one *she had noticed in their saunterings*, which bore the sign of "Ellinwood & Son," and proposed that they should visit it. Her brother consented to the plan, and they entered the office of the building, where they were met by a young gentleman whom Cornelia at once recognized as Alfred Ellinwood. But as she, before entering, had drawn her veil over her face, he did not know her. On learning their wishes, Mr. Ellinwood offered to conduct them through the building and show them all that was worth seeing. Once or twice, while making the tour, when Cornelia spoke, Alfred started and looked at her inquiringly; but apparently she did not notice this, and he said nothing that would indicate that he thought he had ever heard the voice before. Cornelia saw that he looked well and happy, and seemed to be doing well in his business; and this she cared much more to see than she did to see the elevator. When she returned home she wrote to him and congratulated him on his happy appearance when she and her brother paid him a visit at his place of business. In reply, he regretted that *she did not make herself known*, as he should have exerted himself more to make the visit a pleasant one.

In October Cornelia made Mr. Gray's family another visit, and from them she heard considerable about Mr. Ellinwood, as he had corresponded with Mrs. Gray all the summer. Cornelia received this information with much interest but few words. One lovely hazy afternoon, about a week after her arrival at Mr. Gray's, Cornelia told Mrs. Gray that she was going for hazel-nuts in the wood across the meadow; and taking a basket, *she started off*. She wandered from one path to another, gathering leaves, mosses and nuts. After filling her basket, she found some stones and cracked her handkerchief full of nuts; then finding a low-spreading tree, she climbed it, and perching herself near the end of one of its

branches, she commenced a feast in this airy dining-room. Her meal was made merry by song and whistle, and when it was finished she shook her handkerchief, leaned back among the branches and swayed herself to and fro, strongly suggesting the "Rock-a-by baby, up in the treetop," of childhood memories. In this way she sat and dreamed, till suddenly roused to a knowledge of an approaching presence. The leaves rustled; then there was a silence; then the rustle sounded nearer and louder. She looked in the direction whence the noise came, and saw a man approaching. Her heart gave a great thump, and she was so frightened that she nearly lost her balance. She thought of robbers and all sorts of disagreeable things, and concluded the safest thing to do was to keep perfectly still and let the man pass by without discovering her. Nearer and nearer the man came; he passed almost beneath the tree and some distance beyond. Cornelia began to breathe freer. But alas! the man stopped, and she saw him stoop and pick up something. What was it? She leaned forward from her perch and saw the stranger holding her hat in his hand. She had thrown it down on the ground before climbing the tree. The stranger examined the hat carefully, and as he turned it there fell from it a small blue ribbon bow. It had fallen from Cornelia's hair when she took off her hat, and she had left it in the crown for safe keeping. The stranger picked up the ribbon and placed it carefully in his breast pocket.

"Ah!" thought Cornelia, "this looks more like peace than war. It must be some one with whom I am acquainted." And she was on the very verge of making herself known, when the stranger turned around so that she had a plain view of his face, and she saw that it was Mr. Ellinwood. Her intentions were unchanged till the thought flashed through her mind that perhaps Mr. Ellinwood was again insane, though he looked very sane and handsome as he seated himself on a log and began to sing "Kathleen Mavourneen," in a soft mournful voice.

"How foolish I am!" Cornelia said to herself. "I will make myself known to him."

Then all the wild stories of insane people that she had ever heard or read came into her mind, and she was again frightened, and thought 'twould be best to be on the

safe side; so she decided to let herself down from the tree and steal away unobserved. She was putting this plan into execution when the branch from which she was letting herself down broke, and she fell to the ground. She could not suppress a little scream, and before she knew it Alfred was tenderly lifting her from the ground. As soon as she heard him kindly asking if she were injured, and expressing regret at the accident, all thoughts of fear vanished. She explained that she was descending from the tree when she fell, assured him that she was not hurt in the least, and laughed and told him what a nice time she had sitting on a bough, eating nuts like a squirrel. She also told him that she did not know him at first, and was quite scared; but she was very careful not to hint at the thoughts she had about him. Alfred told her that he saw her in the tree, but thought he would wait till she alighted before he spoke, as he was not positive but what she was some new species of bird. He then brought her hat, and she put it on, but said never a word about the bow that had disappeared. Alfred then threw a cloak, which he had brought, around her shoulders, and drawing her arm within his own, they started for Mrs. Gray's through a slow drizzling rain. As they walked on, Alfred told Cornelia he had been at Mr. Gray's but a little while when old Mrs. Gray told him that she was there on a visit, but had gone to the woods, and she was afraid she would get wet, as the mist was changing to rain.

"So," he added, "I volunteered to come in search of you."

"It was very kind of you," said Cornelia, "and I am very much obliged. Are you intending to make a long visit at Mr. Gray's?"

"I cannot yet tell. I came here principally on business in regard to a note, signed by a person not far away; if the proceeds of this note are as great as I hope for, I may remain several days; but if otherwise, I shall return home immediately. I wonder if you could give me any information on the matter?"

Cornelia rather wondered at his reference to business, and replied:

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Ellinwood. I'm not much of a business woman."

"But I will show you the note, and you must tell me whether it is valueless."

And he gave her a magnetic look of inquiry that startled her. At the same moment he stopped under a large tree and took from his breast pocket (the same one in which he had put the ribbon) a small piece of paper, a leaf from a notebook, on which were written a few lines with a lead pencil, and handed it to Cornelia, saying, "This is the note." Cornelia took it, and as she read it and saw her own name affixed, she knew it was the note she had written to him months before, inviting him to the exhibition at the schoolhouse, and adding a few words of hope and cheer. Cornelia's hand trembled so that she almost let the paper fall, as she looked up at Alfred in blank and speechless surprise.

"Well, Cornelia," asked Fred, softly, "what do you say? To me this note has been a promise of so much; of happiness, of a home, of a wife; even the promise of the possession of your dear self, Cornelia. Is the promise good for all that—so much?"

"Yes, Alfred, it is good for all that since you ask it," she said, smiling shyly at him.

He transferred some of the smiles to his own face through the medium of kisses; and when they reached Mr. Gray's, half an hour later, Mrs. Gray said:

"You must have had a regular search, Alfred." And hastily added, "Why, Cor-

nelia, child, I'm afraid you have taken cold; your face is so flushed; you are surely having a fever. Run and change your wet clothes as quickly as possible."

Cornelia obeyed with alacrity, and returned the mischievous smile Alfred gave her as she left the room. That night, in the privacy of her chamber, old Mrs. Gray was made happy by the knowledge that her two favorites, Cornelia and Alfred, were to be married. The next day the happy two paid a visit to Cornelia's uncle. In a little private conversation they had during the day, Cornelia said to her cousin:

"Well, Fred, I have taken your advice, and have promised to become matron of an asylum. The position is to be lifelong."

"I wish you much happiness," said Fred; and added, "All that I regret is, that I am not the patient who will receive your ministrations. A proof of my sincerity." And he bestowed a hearty kiss on each of Cornelia's cheeks. Just then Alfred entered the room, and Fred said, with mock formality:

"I congratulate you, Mr. Ellinwood, on winning such a prize as my cousin Cornelia. Receive the blessing of your venerable cousin Fred!"

Thus Cornelia had her romance.

## MARAH'S TEMPTATION.

BY JOHN A. PETERS.

## I.

ESTHER HARBROOKE was dying; for her the "sands of time" had well nigh run. She knew it, and on this bright balmy morning in May had the couch upon which she lay wheeled up to the window, where she could look for the last time out upon the landscape, stretching a beautiful panorama of hills and dales, interspersed with ribbon steel-blue streams, for miles beyond, and breathe the incense-laden air as it was wafted caressingly in the apartment. Her face, fair to look upon, was whiter than the pillows against which it reclined, and into her soft blue eyes crept a piteous appeal as the door was noiselessly opened, and her most intimate friend, Marah Hill, entered, and coming up to the bedside, knelt down, clasping the clammy hand of the dying in her own warm thrilling one.

"You have come, Marah, at last! I feared Death would claim me for his prey ere you reached me. But God is very good; he has granted my petition. Raise your head, darling, whilst I tell you a tale which has never yet passed my lips. And then promise to comply with the request I am about to solicit?"

The girl obeyed, lifting a tearwet face, only relieved from marble paleness by the dark crimson in the beautifully-bowed lips. An alluring face, with low broad brow, from which were pushed back clustering masses of nutbrown hair, and calm gray eyes, with a world of magnetism in their glance.

"O Esther," she sobbed, "I cannot bear to have you leave me—to think your eyes will soon be sealed in death. O, it cannot be!"

"Alas! it is too true. And something tells me that on this bright May morning, when the air is rife with the music of birds and the fragrance of flowers, my soul shall go forth to meet its Maker. At first I was a bit rebellious when told that I must die, for the future I had mapped out for myself is bright beyond expression; but he who holds my life in the hollow of his palm is wiser than I, and knows what is for the best. He has decreed that I should die,

and I am resigned. Think of me not as dead but sleeping. On the shore of the beautiful beyond I shall await your coming. But I have no time to lose, for already my strength is leaving me. Listen! But first detach this locket from the chain about my neck, and look at the man's face engraved therein."

Wonderingly Marah did so, drawing her breath hard as her eyes encountered those of the man in the locket. An exquisite piece of *bijouterie*, by the way, of pink coral; on the reverse side an elegantly-wrought monogram of beautiful design. And the face it contained was splendid beyond description. Dark and bearded, with sad sweet mouth, and eyes such as Marah Hill had often dreamed of but never hoped to see. She felt that this was the man she was to love. How came Esther Harbrooke by his picture? Eagerly she waited for the explanation. Did he love her—this saintly girl who was dying? Ah! what meant the throbbing at her breast? She felt the blood rushing to her face and suffusing it with warmth, and was afraid that her friend might notice it; so she covered it with the tresses of hair straying about her.

"How do you like the picture, Marah? Does the face look like one a girl could trust?" And Esther held out her hand for the locket.

"'Tis the face of a demigod—handsome and true."

"I believe you, Marah; and, although I have never seen the original, I have promised to become this man's wife."

"I do not understand you, Esther." And in spite of herself, Miss Hill's tone was a trifle petulant.

"Yes," she continued; "and if consumption had not made me its victim, I should have been his wife. Our engagement came about in the queerest way. You know there was always a romantic vein in my composition. One day, in overlooking the columns of the 'Riverside,' I came upon an advertisement soliciting a correspondence. It was prettily worded, and signed 'Brown Clyffe.' Merely in sport I answered it, and in due time, in bold manly chirography,

came a response. The correspondence thus singularly commenced was kept up, and for three months, once a week, I have been the recipient of an epistle from the man I have learned to love simply by imbibing his noble sentiments. A week from to-day, at ten o'clock in the morning, near the entrance of the Pine Grove, I was to have met him, and our marriage-day was to be appointed. But it can never be. God help me to say, "Not my will, but thine be done!"

The emaciated hands were prayerfully clasped and the blue eyes raised on high, as the sweet Madonna-like lips syllabled the words.

"Go on, Esther; tell me more. What is it you wish me to do?"

"I want you to meet Brown on that day, and tell him how it is with me. Tell him to visit my grave, and drop a tear upon it for the sake of her who is lying there. In a little Japanese box, in yonder bureau drawer, you will find all of his letters tied together with a blue ribbon. You may read them after my death if you choose; indeed, I would like to have you. This locket, also, I bequeath to you, and this ring,"—drawing a slender circlet of gold, adorned with a spray of diamonds, from the finger—"take it, and wear it for the sake of the dead. You will obey?"

"Assuredly. But why have you not sent for him?"

"I have been thinking every day I would grow better, and I am not certain where he is at present. He resides in Boston, but he had business to attend to in several places ere coming here. Then again, the name signed to his letters may be a fictitious one. I would that God had willed it otherwise—that I might have bidden him adieu before leaving this world. But you, Marah, will do as agreed?"

"I will. But, Esther, have you no little gift to bestow upon him whereby he can keep the giver in remembrance? Has he your photograph?"

The girl feebly shook her head.

"I did not care to send him one, for, being such an intense blonde, I take a poor picture. But now, as he will never gaze upon my living face, you may carry him my photograph. And tell him how I, Lucy Royce—that's the name he knows me by—prayed for him and blessed him with my latest breath. Now, Marah, take the Bible, and read to me a few comforting words."

And in a low soothing voice Marah read of the beautiful land to which her friend was hastening, the sunlight falling upon them like a benediction, and, not content, braiding athwart the carpet cabalistic characters in gold.

Esther and Marah were orphans; but while the former was dependent upon her uncle for her support, the latter was independently rich—heiress of untold wealth. The two girls, diametrically opposed in their dispositions, had been bosom friends for years, each accustomed to acquaint the other with her secrets; but on account of Marah's absence from her country home for the past six months, she had not been informed of the bright dream that had visited the girl, shedding a halo of glory over her young life.

An hour later, Esther's aunt coming into the room, beheld a strange, a beautiful sight. Locked in death's last sweet sleep, white as if hewn from Parian marble, the blue eyes closed, the sweet lips silenced, Esther lay; while, with open Bible before her, one arm flung caressingly around the neck of the girl she knew not was dead, reading her favorite chapter, the fourteenth of St. John, was Marah, her nutbrown tresses blending with the golden locks of the dead.

Mrs. Griffith closed the Bible, saying:

"Your task is completed, Marah. Esther is dead."

A feeling of desolation swept over the girl as she realized the truth of the words; then she replied, calmly:

"Nay, not dead, Mrs. Griffith, but sleeping."

In her coffin, arrayed for burial, the girl was fair to look upon. The merest trace of a smile hovered about the lips, which in life were sweet as the Virgin Mary's—as if perchance she were dreaming of a sight too radiant to be witnessed by mortal eye. She was shrouded in white. A few waxen blooms, bordered by sweet-scented geranium leaves, from which emanated a subtle cloud of perfume, were clasped in one slender hand—meetest of offerings to her who had been passionately fond of flowers when alive; and tossed on the coffin-lid was a solitary unsullied calla lily—emblematical of the life of her imprisoned within.

Underneath the swaying branches of an elm, by the side of a laughing brook, where wild flowers bloomed, and birds sang from

morning till night, they laid Esther Harbrooke, aged nineteen, to rest; and then into the heart of the usually noble girl came like a fiend in the night, erecting its Medusa-like head, a terrible half-formed thought, which she could not smother, could not drown, but which, as the hours crept on, grew fully accoutered, ready for action. With the locket of pink coral open before her, Marah gave herself up to a musing fit. Should she, or should she not, obey the voice of the tempter—perform his bidding? Into the wonderful eyes of the man she looked, and then her decision was made.

"Yes," she said, low to herself, "I will obey the dictates of my heart, and marry this man—Esther's lover. I can personate her well, and no one will ever be wronged by the fraud, for I will love him, study his slightest wish, and make him happy. Esther is asleep in her grave; no harm will be done her; and I will risk all consequences that may arise from this rash act. I am called a beautiful, fascinating girl; men bow down to me as to a queen, and render me homage. I have admirers without number, any one of whom would be glad to call me wife. Is the original of this likeness so different from other men that he will not appreciate the boon about to be conferred upon him? Esther was a saint upon earth, lovely, yielding, and yet, if I am anything of a physiognomist, this does not look like the face of a man who will be satisfied with one of the clinging nature. The ivy is a pretty trailing vine, but with no prop in time of a storm, of what avail would it be?—a clog, a useless thing, burdening the ground. In case of sickness, of danger, a brave courageous woman is required. I am one of that sort, who would be true unto death to the man I loved. This man attracts me as none other can, and, Brown," smiling into the upturned face, "I love you—love you! and I shall meet you at the place mentioned on the day appointed. Why," with a start, "that is to-morrow."

Thus she stifled her conscience with specious reasoning; and just as the god of day was flushing the eastern horizon with rosy light, Marah arose and began to beautify herself for the benefit of the man she was to meet. For the time being that still small voice within her was at rest, and with a slight flush suffusing the commonly impassive face, brought there by excitement, she was lovely as a poet's dream as she set

out upon her guilty errand. About half a mile from her home was the Pine Grove. She walked along leisurely, inhaling the exhilarating air, and plucking wild flowers as she went. As she neared the spot her heart misgave her, but with a determination worthy a better cause she kept on her route. Was he there? She entered the road leading through the forest like an aisle through a cathedral, made dark and solemn by the Rembrandtesque-looking pines which tossed in the air their funereal plumes, but nothing did she see of the man she had come to meet. She glanced at her watch. 'Twas ten o'clock—the hour named. Where was the laggard? Perhaps, and the thought was like death to the proud girl, he had been playing upon the credulity of Esther and would not come. But no, impossible; the man was true. A sudden gale of wind swept through the trees, causing them to rock gently to and fro, their plume-tossed branches emitting a plaintive moan, and then circling around Marah, lifted the little gray hat with its floating feather from her head, carrying it to the ground, at the same time unfastening the sumptuous coil of hair fastened at the back of her head, which glided, a sombre-hued serpent, adown her back. And then as she stood there dazed, yet expectant, fairer than ever before, a man rose from a giant boulder in the thicket of evergreens and came towards her.

He had been sitting there for half an hour, vaguely wondering if his inditing that advertisement for the "Riverside" had not been an imprudent act—a thing he would regret in after years. He was fastidious where women are concerned. Would this one meet his expectations? He knew she was lady-like and refined by the tone of her letters, and visions of a fragile girl with sweet face, and blue eyes, and engaging manners, trailed panorama-like before him just as through this entrance of pines glided a slender willowy figure, clad in gray, with crimson worsted shawl wound boa fashion around her throat and waist, and little round hat with sweeping plume perched jauntily on the nutbrown coils of hair. He cowered back a bit in the shrubbery to note her movements and gaze upon her face ere she joined him. Such a face and form! He compressed his lips hard to keep back the cry of surprise. Was this royal creature the one he was bound to? She was born to command, not to be controlled, as he was

led to believe his girl to be by the manner in which she wrote. Surely, her hand never penned the missives he had read. It was at this juncture the capricious gale tossed off her hat, and he stepped forward to meet her, picking it up as he did so. In front of her he paused, his hat courteously lifted, the picture of a true well-born gentleman, at a loss for the first time in his life what to say. Then he extended his hand.

"Miss Royce—Lucy! am I right in calling you so?"

Half-afraid to encounter his glance, Marah stood with bowed head and downcast eyes, essaying in vain to fasten up the redundant hair coiling like a sentient thing of evil about her, one hand still holding the freshly-gathered bouquet of Mayflowers—pink and violet-eyed, knotted together with a supple vine of green.

Like a strain of music, all alive with sweetness, the word "Brown" fell from her lips. Her ungloved hand felt the pressure of his as he drew her forward and seated her on the boulder. Then in blissful silence they sat for a time. Finally he spoke:

"I can scarcely credit my senses, Lucy. You are the very opposite of the girl I pictured in my dreams. She was a daisy—a shy violet with drooping head—a wee bit of a creature. You are a magnificent woman, superbly formed, splendid as a cactus—a woman able to cope with hardships, if your face speaks aright. You are more beautiful than a goddess. Can you love me? and are you willing to abide by our agreement?"

She made answer evasively. "Are you satisfied with my looks, Brown? or would you rather I favored more the 'lady of your dreams?'"

"Nay," to her latter inquiry; "I would have you as you are."

"Then, Brown, I will be your wife. But—my name is not Lucy."

"A feigned name, eh? Well, Lucy is too simple a nomenclature to be applied to you. Tell me your own, pray?"

"Marah Hill; and yours?"

"Is Brown Clyffe, the one I signed to the advertisement—a fortunate thing, by the way, for me." And he circled her in his arms and rained kisses upon her glowing lips, that did not shrink from his.

Dangerously happy, not a thought of the dead girl she was personating forced itself

upon Marah. He was content with her; and she—how supremely blessed she was in his love. What power he exercised over her, to sway her so, to make her tremble—she who had jeered at the name of love.

That glorious morning! In after years it came back to her memory perfect as now. The plume-crowned pines waving in the breeze, birds carolling in the branches; flowers decorating the ground on every side, and on a mammoth rock a blushing girl, not able to meet the glance of the man at her side, her bouquet of wild flowers lying in her lap, too happy even to think. What a grand man he was! He was tall of form, he had broad shoulders, and he had the face of a Greek god, with a smile brave as a warrior's and sweet as a woman's. And this man belonged to her!

His hand touched hers, thrilling her anew. "What a simple yet beautiful nosegay, Marah? Are you fond of flowers?"

"Inordinately. But I prefer the unassuming and sweet to those that are gaudy and lavish of color. The fragrant violet more, for instance," she smiled, "than the showy cactus to which you compared me. They are rightly called 'God's undertones,' methinks, for they speak of everything bright and heavenly."

He took the flowers in his hand, eyeing them critically as he spoke. "Arranged with the skill of an artiste. I judged your tastes were æsthetic by the epistles you sent me, Marah. What a strange courtship ours has been. Upon the spur of the moment I dashed off that which has brought me the greatest blessing the world contains for me. Marah! my Marah!"

The girl shivered though the day was warm, but no response dropped from her lips.

"You are cold, Marah. How selfish I am, keeping you here neath the shadow of these dismal pines. Let's go out in the sunlight."

He wound the worsted shawl closer about her slender shape, and together they went out into the warmth, she as submissive in his hands as a neophyte in the hands of a hierophant. Time glided by as if winged, each charmed with the other; to them it passed unnoticed. A scholar, a traveller, and a fine conversationalist, with nothing pedantic about him, Marah listened entranced as he recounted tales of countries he had visited.



"My home is in Boston," he said in conclusion, "as you are aware. My mother, a widow, a cultivated lady, will greet you warmly and make you welcome as her daughter. Are you not afraid to trust your fate in the hands of a stranger—a penniless adventurer for aught you know?"

"No," she dissented, her eyes lifted to his, "your very countenance speaks for you. You are a gentleman; I care not if you have not a penny to your name. Your strong hands will always keep the wolf from our door. But Brown," her voice low and intensely thrilling, "what if I should prove an adventuress—what then?"

"What then? It is not a supposable case; and even then, darling, I should love you. Why? your lips ask. How can I tell? Can the sun help shining, the birds refrain from singing, or the flowers keep from blossoming? No more can I help being drawn to you as steel to the loadstone."

For all reply she drew the crimson shawl more closely about her form, shuddering slightly. "It is late, Brown, and I must go home. You will accompany me?"

He consulted his watch. "It lacks twenty minutes of car-time, Marah, and I have business to transact elsewhere, which will cause me to bid you adieu for the present. In a week's time I may claim you for my own?"

"You may, Brown; I will be ready and waiting, no reluctant bride, perfectly willing to trust my welfare in your hands."

A few more words were exchanged, the wee bunch of violets stuck in his buttonhole at his desire, and then as the car-whistle sounded over the hill, with a parting embrace he sprang away, and the girl was left alone, his voice still ringing in her ear, her lips still warm with the kisses he had left thereon. Then with swift footsteps she sped to her home—a mansion of gray granite, built in ancient architectural style, with nicely-laid-out grounds, environed by majestic elms. Here, with two distant relatives, Mr. and Mrs. Monkton, and a retinue of well-trained servants, she lived.

## II.

THE day appointed for the wedding was come—ushered in by wind and rain. From a sleepless couch Marah rose as the first rays of light stole in the room, and with ghastly cheeks and throbbing brow looked

out upon the rain-bathed earth. Not a wink of sleep had visited her the preceding night. Through all the weary hours she had lain, with brain hard at work. Right and wrong had been battling like antagonists in her breast all through the livelong night, but right had come off victorious at last, yet left her weak and spiritless. Ere retiring she had knelt down by the bedside trying to form a prayer. In vain; the words came not; instead, countless beings shrouded in white, all owning the blue eyes of the dead, flocked about her, warning her to desist in her work of wrong. In bed the apparitions kept vigil still, and when morning came Marah's decision was revoked; she would not marry Brown Clyffe, but confess to him her sin. The rain lashed the window-panes, it beat down the waving spires of grass in the yard. "Typical of my future life, the day," she said, spiritlessly—"all dark and stormy." Then mechanically she made her toilet, and when the breakfast-bell sounded, went down stairs and into the dining-room calmly as was her wont. Mr. and Mrs. Monkton were not apprised of the step she had contemplated; all the while it had not appeared to her tangible and real, and she had been afraid to speak of it. After the meal, leaving word that when Mr. Clyffe came to show him in the blue drawing-room, and have her summoned, she went up to her room. No change in her attire did she make for his coming, but in her neutral-tinted dress, unrelieved by brightness, her face gray and set, she crouched down by the window watching for his appearance.

A carriage stopped before the door; a gentleman in high hat and greatcoat, tall and elegant of form, got out—the one whose coming Marah dreaded yet looked for. A moment later her maid came to the door, handing her a card upon which was engraved the name "Brown Clyffe."

"He is in the blue drawing-room, miss."

And sombrely attired, her heart throbbing hard and fast, she descended the stairs and entered the room in which he was sitting—a wilderness of Aubusson, *marqueterie* and pale blue satin. He stood before a portrait of hers, studying it, but when he heard her footsteps he turned around and held out his arms, longing to embrace her.

She stepped back, pale as a California lily. "Do not touch me, Brown. I am an impostor—not what you think me."

He regarded her with astonishment. Had she gone mad, crazy? He knew not how otherwise to explain her strange conduct. Again he reached forth his arms to draw her to him; again she resisted, waving him back.

"You must hear what I have to say, Mr. Clyffe, ere touching me. Suppress your feelings, please, while I explain to you my variableness—tell you of the wrong I've committed against the dead and living. Be seated."

He complied with her petition, and sitting on a stool at his feet, fastening upon him her fathomless eyes, she began: "You came here to-day to find a happy bride; instead you find a distraught creature—a female Machiavelian. I am not the girl to whom you betrothed yourself by letter. She is dead. I believed myself to be her friend, but I have acted toward her the part of a hypocrite."

He sat in a sort of stupor, not comprehending a word she said. "What do you mean, Marah? Do you wish to withdraw from the engagement consummated between us? Have you for me no love?"

"No love? It is for love of you I premeditated this unpardonable act, and almost consigned my soul to perdition. I will try and speak rationally."

And in a low broken tone she told him all; how she had been called to the bedside of her friend to see her die; how ere Azrael, angel of death, came, she was made cognizant of her friend's betrothal; and what she had promised to perform. "But, Brown," in conclusion, "when I gazed upon your pictured face, my heart within me swelled as a night-blooming cereus when bursting into blossom; I loved you, unwomanly as the confession may seem to you. The temptation was too great to overcome, and I succumbed to it. But I have suffered untold agony since, and only because I am afraid Lucy's blue eyes will haunt me till my dying day, if I do not confess, I tell you. You despise me!" as his bearded lips curled half contemptuously.

He turned his eyes full upon her as he replied: "You are not the pure girl I believed you to be to thus betray the trust reposed in you by your saintly friend. You do well to repent ere repentance would be of no avail. O, why didn't you tell me all at our first meeting?—for I love you, Marah, love you with my whole soul, as I could

never have loved the gentle girl who has gone to her final home. I—"

She stopped him. "Further words are unnecessary, sir. I know how you despise me. I have sinned and repented. I wish to make reparation. Here are the letters you wrote to Lucy Royce, bequeathed to me on her deathbed—" taking a package from her pocket—"also the ring she had me wear, and the locket containing your likeness. Here is her photograph, too, which she bade me give you. It does not do her justice, however. She was a fair engaging girl, too good for this earth, about whom lingered not a shadow of evil."

Mechanically he took the photograph she handed him, hardly looking at it, hardly listening to the meritorious deeds she was rehearsing of her departed friend; his whole soul was going out to this unconventional girl, who had so nobly confessed her sin. He bent over her, eager to be reconciled to her.

"Marah, I retract my hasty words; none but the truly noble could do what you have done. Forgive, and let me claim my bride."

"No, Brown, it cannot be. You are sorry for me now, but would in the future regret allying yourself to one who has forever forfeited your esteem. Go now, please."

He expostulated in vain, pleaded as a man whose lips were touched with fire, but ever came from her pale lips the one sad refrain "It cannot be." He saw that further importuning was useless at present, and rose to go.

As a white lily bends its head thirstily seeking the dew, so she bent hers to receive the blessing he was invoking upon her.

"God forever keep you, my darling, and if the time ever arrives when you will become my wife, write the one word 'come,' and though an ocean intervenes between us, I will come."

He gathered her to him, pressed kiss after kiss upon her unresisting lips, then released her and was gone. And Marah? She never moved, never stirred, but cold as snow, almost as colorless, bereft of motion, knelt there for a long long time, while the wind moaned about the house, and the raindrops sounded a musical tintinnabulation on the window glasses. Then murmuring: "It is best so; if I should do as he wishes, as I wish, in the time to come he would have no respect for me; and then I—I should die,

as I believe I shall now," she got up, and wearily groped her way to her room, where, in its privacy, she wrestled long and unsuccessfully with her sorrow.

And the days passed on, till, when the summer solstice set in, in company with Mr. and Mrs. Monkton, who were at a loss to account for the change in the girl, once blooming as a Hebe, now pale as a *religieuse*, Marah started for a quiet resort amongst the mountains, hoping the strong free air would bring back her strength and vivacity. The change was in a measure beneficial, the long walks in which she indulged did her good; but rarely a smile came to the lips of the girl, who became a favorite with the guests at the hotel, and whom the men dubbed the snow image, Frostina, and the like, on account of her coldness and their inability to charm her. Lord Trelyan, coxcombical and shallow of pate, was infatuated, averring:

"By gad! She was a jewel among women, and he—aw—meant to own her, if she did make one feel so uncomfortable and little in her presence." And though he got rebuffs oftener than encouragement, he became her devoted shadow.

One morning when the rumbling stage-coach gave up its inmates in front of the hotel, Marah beheld Brown Clyffe among the number. Had he followed her? or was he not aware of her whereabouts? In either case she was delighted that he was there. At the *table-d'hôte* she found herself *vis-a-vis* to him. He inclined his head quietly, but said not a word. For once Marah was thankful of Lord Trelyan's senseless talk.

After dinner, while the band was discoursing its most cheering strains, as Marah was sitting at the extreme end of the piazza, a statuesque being in her white dress, with a cluster of white violets at her throat, Brown Clyffe joined her.

"I heard, Marah, that you had come to this mountain resort to while away a few weeks, so I packed my valise and came, too, anxious to see you, hoping to convince you that I love you truly. Darling, will you trust me now?"

"I am glad you are here, Brown," proffering him her hand, "but I am strong in my determination not to become your wife."

He sighed, then dropped her hand.

"Is it true, Miss Hill, that you are receiving the attentions of that dandyish

Lord Trelyan—that you are to become his wife?"

"It is not. The *on dit* is false, sir, as you know. I love but you."

"And yet you will not marry me?"

"I cannot, sir, because of the indelicate step I took—which maddens me when I think of it."

She would have risen to her feet, but he put out his hand and detained her.

"At least we can be friends?"

"Impossible; I do not want your friendship. It is best that we should be to each other as strangers."

This time she rose and leaned over the railing, presumably to watch a body of pearl-gray clouds in the heavens, in reality, not to see the pleading in his eyes. He rose also and stood by her side.

"Marah?"

"Well, Mr. Clyffe?"

"Mark my words. Sooner or later, perverse girl, you shall become Mrs. Clyffe. It is so written in the book of Fate, and you cannot avert your destiny. You almost craze me with your stubbornness. Heavens! how peerlessly beautiful you are. Shall we walk up and down the piazza?"

Almost unconsciously she found herself promenading at his side.

"He is pure crystalline ice on the outside, but there are volcanic elements within," she thought. "I am as plastic as wax in his hands. Nevertheless, I shall not marry him if 'tis written in the book of Fate." I do wish he would go away."

But he did not go; had no intention of leaving till the Monktons left.

One warm morning Marah took her sketch-book, and waiting her opportunity slipped away unnoticed by the guests of the hotel. Up a steep path she toiled, through brush and over rocks, till she came to the place she sought—a beautiful spot called White Rocks, so named from a number of boulders of a whitish color strewn about, looking as if Titans had been indulging in a game of quoits. Upon one of these boulders she seated herself, over which a torturingly shaped hemlock protruded its branches—mosses and lichens at her feet. She was taking a bird's-eye view of a distant cliff, when the noise of a loosened rock rolling down the slope attracted her attention. Another instant she had risen to her feet, pale with horror, a terrible fear grappling at her heart. Below her, lying

in the shade, his great head resting on his doubled-up muscular arm, a wide *sombrero* covering his face, was Brown Clyffe, asleep, and brandishing a club over the unconscious man, ready to strike, was a brigandish dark man of unkempt appearance—one of a band of plunderers infesting the neighborhood. His object was to render insensible the sleeper, undoubtedly, to possess himself of the valuables on his person. Marah would have cried out, but iron fingers seemed tightening about her throat, preventing her from doing so. Then with an upward cry for help she sprang forward, caught the up-lifted arm of the ruffian just in time to hinder the club from striking the unconscious man, but receiving upon her own arm the blow, not in its full force, though, intended for another. The man veered about, malignant as a fiend from Hades, gripping her by the throat—his eyes full of a murderous resolve. She gave a scream as his fingers were tightening their clutch about it—a scream which awoke Brown Clyffe, causing him to start to his feet in alarm. He took in the whole proceedings at once, and felled the man to the ground with the weapon that was to have taken his life.

"Are you hurt, Marah?" as she sank in a heap at his feet. "For God's sake, darling, tell me, are you hurt?"

No answer; no movement on her part; she lay as if life had indeed been taken from her.

"Marah! Marah!" he cried in an agony of suspense; but still deaf to his entreaties, his glances, she remained.

A tiny rivulet hard by was winding its

way slowly down the declivity, wetting with its spray the moss that grew on its edge; he hurried to it, and filling his hat with the water, dashed it in the face of the senseless girl. She unclosed her eyes, a faint moan coming from the white lips.

"Thank God! you are alive. Did the villain strike you?"

"He struck me upon the arm with his club. 'Tis shattered—broken, I fear."

"And you received that blow in my stead? O Marah, how could you?" assisting her to rise.

"He might have murdered you—and then, Brown, O! I should not have cared to live."

At this he kissed the pallid lips passionately. "Darling, you will make me happy? You will not let the past interfere now?"

"Never again, Brown. But take me to the hotel at once, please; my arm is growing exceedingly troublesome."

"How selfish of me. Come, no nonsense!" And he lifted her in his arms and carried her down the hill to the hotel, the foiled freebooter sending after them a glare of hate.

Marah's arm was not broken, as feared, but for many days she had it in a sling. Brown Clyffe her constant companion, proving as the days went by how much he loved her. In October, when the leaves began to fall, they were married, and Marah was never haunted by the blue eyes of the dead, but often in her dreams they smiled lovingly upon her; and frequently they two, husband and wife, visit the spot where Esther is laid, and scatter flowers upon her grave.

## MARGARET GAIRLOCH'S BEAUTY.

BY ESTHER SERLE KENNETH.

THE herd of gay little ponies with their merry riders came flying out of the avenue gates, and sped down the road like a flock of low-flying birds. "Whoa, Turk!" said Fritz Bochart, on the brow of a hill, holding his great black horse. He counted them—Tot, Fairy, Mouse, Penny and Sparkle—Margaret Gairloch and her four little sisters. They rode every morning, and since he had discovered their practice he invariably watched them from Mount Merton start off. He did not know them at all—not even the names of the ponies; he had only learned that they were Doctor Gairloch's daughters, and very pretty little girls. He was just home from the war, camping on the plains and raiding upon bushwhackers, and this glimpse of feminine spirit and loveliness attracted him. He had singled out his favorite—the eldest, Margaret herself—and sought for her first; but he never thought of making himself seen by her, or of attracting her attention in any way, though he had watched them so long that his great cavalry horse would prick up his ears at the unlocking of the gate, wait, attentive and stately, until the cavalcade had gone, and then wheel unhesitatingly about for home, evidently of perfect faith that the purpose of his journey was done. To the surprise of both horse and rider, this morning they came galloping directly up the hill.

All he had hitherto seen of the five girls had been the bloom and fairness of their faces and the grace of their young figures. They all rode black horses and wore gray habits, but each one was very different from the other, and he never mistook one for either of her sisters. It was Margaret, light, stately, *petite* in the saddle, who came first, with the least of the little girls at her side, a child of nine years.

"Look out for Penny's heels, girls," he heard her say, clear and ringingly; "he may get scared at the blasted trees, as he did last summer. Keep Mouse against his bit, Effie. Steady, now, and we'll leap the creek."

The fairy-like clattering of the tiny hoofs came swiftly up the stony hillside. As those lovely faces grew upon Fritz Bochart's sight he forgot his first impulse to spur his

horse aside from the road. With rapt eyes he sat motionless as a statue and gazed. On, on they came, laughing, blooming, fair and beautiful in their airy flight; he never to his dying day forgot the sight. They passed him. As they went they turned their heads to glance at him, and he was left half blinded by the flash of blue and gold. Little Effie's azure eyes were perhaps the widest of any.

"Why, Margaret, who was that?" she said.

"Well, I don't know," answered Margaret. "It might have been an equestrian statue for anything that I saw to the contrary."

"Whom *could* it have been, Mag?" cried Gloria, and Rose, and Mignon, whipping up to her side.

Now Margaret knew very well who it was, but the clear-cut face held its own.

"I cannot tell you, my dear sisters."

"Wasn't he handsome?" cried Gloria, with temples like snow traced by blue lines, and her great summer blue eyes dancing with enthusiasm.

"He looked like a prince," pronounced little Rose, with sweet-pea cheeks aglow.

"Such wonderful eyes!" exclaimed Mignon, tossing her banner of gold hair from one dainty shoulder.

The child Effie looked at Margaret.

"Did you ever see him before, Mag?"

"Yes, my dear."

"When?"

"Yesterday morning."

"Where?"

"Here."

"Did you ever see him before that?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Here. And here he has been every morning for the last three weeks. Mind your gait, Penny!"

Little Effie drew a long breath.

"Perhaps he is a statue," she said.

Margaret laughed.

"Hardly one of stone, I think."

"Do you know his name, Mag?" asked Gloria.

"No. Penny, attend to your paces, and don't trouble yourself about those stumps."

It was not a falsehood. Margaret did not know that the young man's name was Bochart. But when he told her so, a little later, it did not surprise her.

She sent the girls on to the top of the hill, and went into the woods to get a handful of mulberries. Why did she do that? Because, though she had her father's Scotch name, she had her mother's French temperament, and was a coquette.

Fritz Bochart came riding swiftly into the mulberry woods. Why did he do that? Because, though he had his father's German name, he had also his heart, and was as simple as a child, wherever women are concerned.

"You dropped your whip," he said.

"Thank you," coolly, taking it.

She was dismounted. She had done so before he spoke.

"Let me help you to get the berries," he said. "You need not be afraid," he added. "I am Fritz Bochart. You know my mother, I think."

"I have seen her. Yes, I have spoken with her."

"And I have seen you ride."

"Well?"

"I love you."

He was looking at her, utterly rapt in her face. She curled her red mouth.

"Because I have thick hair and my nose is straight. Nevertheless, may I ask you to put me on my horse?"

The next moment his hand was smarting from contact with her little boot, and Penny was galloping merrily up the hill.

"Gloria, are you dressed? Come down with me."

Margaret stood at the door of her father's drawing-room to receive her guests, and Gloria was not far distant. Each guest looked from one to the other, bewildered as to which was most beautiful. But Fritz Bochart knew instantly. Purple eyes "drew beauty's prize" from violet. Chestnut braids had richer shades than golden curls. Black velvet was more magnificent than azure silk.

"Will you give me the first waltz?" he asked, true to his nationality.

"If you cannot find a better partner."

In an hour he was at her side, waiting eagerly for her attention.

"In a moment," she smiled, passing him with a bevy of gentlemen, even though the

music had struck up. He waited patiently.

He had lost sight of her in the crowd, when she touched his shoulder with her fan.

"I am ready."

They turned into the measure. It swept them twice across the long room; the subtle intoxication of the waltz, like that of no other, was thrilling Bochart's very heart, when out of his arms his partner was torn as by a thunderbolt. He paused dizzily. A mass of velvet drapery and a broken chandelier lay at his feet, and from them the smoke and scent of fire rose. He was bewildered, and could not understand that Margaret Gairloch, crushed beneath the fall of the heavy chandelier, was fatally burned and crippled for life. The white skin had gleamed for the last time; the rosy bloom had fled forever; never again would the silken lashes hide the beautiful eyes; never more would the supple left arm guide little Penny over hill and dale. Margaret Gairloch's beauty was gone forever.

He did not see her again till summer had gone. He met her driving slowly through the lanes one calm day in the fall. Once or twice he had been told of her appearance, heavily veiled. Now her veil was cast aside, and she would never be beautiful any more. There was no denying it. He looked at her, trying to keep the tears out of his eyes. She met his gaze and smiled. He took her hand.

"I am very glad to see you."

"Are you?" she asked; "and all my thick hair gone?"

O, how sad and sweet her eyes had grown in that long six weeks lying in her lonely chamber!

"It was so pretty, you know," she said, simply.

"I know very well, Margaret."

"You remember the heavy braids I used to fasten up with roses?"

"Yes."

"And the mass of curls pushed behind my ears?"

"Yes."

"And the little tendrils ringlets about my temples?"

"I do."

"Are you sorry it is gone?"

"No. Are you?"

"No."

He stood with one foot on the edge of the low-hung carriage, and holding both her hands in one of his upon his knee.

"See how my wrist is misshapen," she said.

"Poor little wrist!" he answered.

For a moment she looked at him steadily. Her lip quivered—she hid her face for a moment.

"There," she said, looking up bravely. "I thought I had done crying, but the sight of you brought it all back again. The old pride that I hugged so—I feel its loss like a limb that has been buried."

"And yet you would not let me love you for your beauty. Did *you* love it?"

"Yes; and now I have my reward."

She passed her thin hand over her face.

"I knew it would fail me sometime. Long ago, when I was a child, I had a dream, and I always have known since that it would fail me. I thought I was used to its loss, and here see my poor scarred face. But what one has loved for twenty years one cannot cease to regret in two months."

"You are grieved, then?"

"No, I am glad it has gone; it must have gone sometime. And now good-by to you. I must be going."

She lifted the rein, but he caught at it.

"Not good-by to me, Margaret, darling. I thought I loved you for your beauty, but it was not so. My heart never before held for you the tenderness that it holds to-day. Margaret, look at me. Will you not trust me? Can I make you happy?"

Deadly pale, she struggled with herself.

"Don't—don't talk to me like this," she said. "You must not. I was just growing secure in myself. Don't break down the strength I have so toilfully built up in many weeks by a few impulsive words. Fritz, you pity me."

"I love you."

"Dare I trust you?"

"You may."

He drew her down to his lips, and she was answered; for blood is thicker than water, and love leads as high as heaven.

## MARIAN LESLIE'S HUSBAND:

—OR,—

### A WORM IN THE BUD.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

#### CHAPTER I.

"When the morning, half in shadow,  
Ran along the hill and meadow,  
And with milk-white fingers parted  
Crimson roses, golden-hearted,  
Opening over ruins hoary  
Every purple morning-glory,  
And outshaking from the bushes  
Singing larks and pleasant thrushes—  
That's the time our little baby,  
Strayed from Paradise it may be,  
Came."

At the last tinkle of the breakfast-bell Mrs. James Hazeltine opened her chamber door and slowly descended the stairs. The lady was about forty years of age, and had one of those sweet serious faces which are sure indications of sweetness and serenity of mind. The light hair was banded smoothly back under a half-square of fine thread lace, and her large and somewhat fleshy figure was toned down by the dove-color of her morning-dress. A bow of rose-pink ribbon at the throat finished a toilet as soft and harmonious as the wearer.

Stepping from the last stair, the lady crossed the wide entry to the open door and looked out. The first thing she saw was her husband standing erect with his hands behind his back, and watching the gardener gather ripe currants into a bushel basket, giving orders for the day while he watched. Looking beyond and above the garden, the lady saw a morning sky of silver and blue; leaning against that, a rim of spruce and pine woods belting the horizon; nearer still, a town built in white rows of houses on two hills that dipped to a river on whose bank the Hazeltines' house stood. Then the pleasant gray eyes came back to the garden, and Mrs. Hazeltine spoke in that gentle voice which you would expect to hear from her:

"Mr. Hazeltine, breakfast is ready."

Mr. Hazeltine, an alert wiry man several years his wife's senior, looked up with a

quick motion that seemed as though it might snap his head off but did not, and, without making any reply, he immediately obeyed the summons.

The two entered the handsome breakfast-room together and took their seats at the table. It was a pleasant domestic picture. The morning sun poured in at the windows of the room, drawing fragrance from the luxuriant and well kept plants that filled the stands, and delighting a pair of canaries whose gilded cage hung half veiled in the full lace curtains. In another cage in one corner of the room a large parrot swung sulkily, and bent and turned his gorgeous neck, seeming to be taking a critical and rather contemptuous survey of the two persons at the table. Presently it broke the silence with a harsh discordant laugh, and screamed out, "Pretty nice old folks! Where's the children?"

Mrs. Hazeltine blushed; she always blushed when Poll made this impudent speech, which had been learned from nobody knew whom. And Mr. Hazeltine half laughed and half frowned, and repeated his usual comment on such occasions:

"I can't imagine who the deuce taught Poll to say that."

For in the Hazeltine mansion were no children.

If Mrs. Hazeltine intended to make any response, she had no chance, for there arose at this instant such a hubbub from the ordinarily quiet kitchen regions as entirely drove everything else from her mind.

"O lud-a-massy! Come right here, Thomas! Come in and show Miss Hazeltine. O, if I ever! Well, if this doesn't beat all!"

And at this crisis in the chorus of exclamations a tall, angular Yankee servant-woman appeared in the door, her face flushed crimson with excitement, her eyes and mouth open, and her hands upraised. In her wake followed the stableman, his

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countenance showing a struggle between a like excitement and a sense of the importance of his present position. And, carefully held on the man's outstretched hands, lay a rosy smiling infant, but a few days old, apparently.

The couple rose from the table in silent astonishment at this apparition, and the domestics had the satisfaction of an undisturbed use of their tongues.

"Thomas found it, mam, if you ever heard of such a thing! A baby in the hay, curled up like a bird in a nest; and, I'm sure, as nice a baby as a body need see. And to think who could have left him there, poor little wretch! See the dimples in his shoulders, and in his blessed little elbows, mam, and in his knuckles, when you can get his hand open. He shuts his fists well, bless him! Look at them rings of hair, equal to a baby a year old. And his nose isn't a bit snub."

"I found 'im in the hay, sir, *jist beyant* the harness-room, sir," Thomas struck in. "I wint up to feed the hoss, sir, and was *jist pitchin'* down a wisp o' hay, an' I heard a little cooin' like, an' I said to meself 'it's the pigeons is got in,' sir; an' I looked round to see the pigeons, sir, an' what did I see but this little spalpeen, sir, layin' there in the hay for all the world like Moses in the bulrushes? An' I wint, sir, an' took 'im up, sir—"

"Hold your tongue!" exclaimed Mr. Hazeltine, recovering his speech. "That is enough! Have you any idea who put the child in my stable? Have you any idea whom he belongs to?"

"Is it hold me tongue, or spake, you want me to?" asked Thomas, in an injured tone.

"Spake!" said the master, laughing.

"I know no more than the man in the moon, sir. I'm thinkin' it must belong to some furriner goin through the town."

"No idea in life!" broke in Nancy again. "It must belong to somebody passing through the town. It don't look the least bit like anybody I ever saw, and I haven't heard a whisper that anybody was likely—that is, that—I mean I haven't—" And Nancy floundered in inextricable confusion.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Hazeltine had taken the child in her arms, and, seating herself with it, was examining its pretty face, its rings of brown hair, and trying to coax a smile from it. When Nancy had subsided into a

blushing silence, the lady looked up into her husband's face with a glance of eager inquiry. He hesitated, rubbed the side of his nose, then said:

"There's no knowing who it belongs to. Somebody might turn up and claim it by-and-by."

"O, nobody'll ever come after a child that they've deserted that way," cried Nancy, recovering. "If you don't keep it, Miss Hazeltine, I will."

"You, Nancy!" said her mistress. "What nonsense!"

"I shall do it, mam!" Nancy answered, loftily. "Such a child as that shan't go a beggin'."

It was impossible to think of breakfast after such a chance. To be sure, Mr. Hazeltine assumed an air of sublime masculine indifference, but his wife observed that he stayed about the room and the house a full hour longer than usual; and when, at length, he felt himself obliged to go about his business, he condescended to give the little one an awkward chuck under the chin with his finger, and to put on a regular coaxing smile to allure a smile in return.

"We may as well let the little fellow stay now till we see what turns up," he said, with affected indifference. "Ten to one somebody will be after him before the day is over. But you'd better not let any one have him till I come home."

Now Mrs. Hazeltine knew just as well as though he had said it, that her husband meant to keep the child, that he would torment himself all day lest somebody should come after it, and that if any one did come, he would try all his powers of argument, persuasion and bribery to induce them to give the child up. And in her own heart Mrs. Hazeltine was no less willing; for she had warmed toward the helpless little thing from the first moment she felt its soft velvety hand, and heard its happy contented cooing.

In her earlier married life she had felt little need of children; but as youth faded, and age began to send warnings of its approach, she shrank from the prospect of having no one of her own to cheer her declining years, no young life which should spring at her side and seem to renew her own youth, no one to whom they could leave their wealth and their name.

Well, days passed, and weeks, and nothing could be learned of the foundling, no

clue to his parentage, no trace of the person or persons who left him. When every effort had been exhausted, the Hazeltines formally adopted him as their own son, naming him Francis, and it was understood among their friends that henceforth no allusion was to be made to his mysterious birth.

Mothers of families laughed indulgently at Mrs. Hazeltine as she hung over the cradle day after day, watching the child's abortive three-cornered smiles, and persisting in finding sense in its unintelligible coolings.

"See him, father!" she would cry at some absurd little baby feat; and Mr. Hazeltine would drop the unread paper, or turn from writing to watch the child with admiring delight.

Surely there never was another baby like theirs, and never would be, in their opinion. It is surprising what a wonderful affair even a commonplace baby gets to be to those who own it, and this was not a commonplace baby, but a little infant Bacchus. Fresh, stout and ruddy, the child was, with lustrous brown eyes, and brown hair that curled like vine-tendrils. Dimples lurked in knuckles, elbows, shoulders, chin, everywhere, in short, that a dimple could possibly find lodgement; his eyelashes, carefully clipped by his new mother, grew of amazing length, and he had the autocratic airs of a young monarch.

Nothing could exceed the zeal and triumph of Nancy in this state of things. She would steal from her washtub to bend over the lace-draped cradle where the young idol slept, or rise from needful rest after a hard day's work, to tote him about in her arms when he chose that she should do so. Ordinarily prim and snappish to a degree that might frighten little ones away, Master Francis could, unrebuked, tear her hair down, muss her collar, upset her work-basket, or pull over pitchers of milk on her clean floor. He was a company child, hers as much as theirs, and woe to the one who looked even askance on him with an evil eye.

And so we leave the child to blossom out like a rose in such sunshine, receiving and giving joy, the happy tyrant of happy subjects.

"Welcome her, all things youthful and sweet,  
Scatter the blossoms under her feet!"

NEARLY half a mile from the Hazeltines, at the opposite extremity of the village, was a large, square, old-fashioned mansion where had lived the Leslies time out of mind. A Mr. Leslie had lived in an old, old house on the same site, and the present mansion, itself old, had been built by his son, and was now owned and occupied by that son's granddaughter. Agatha Leslie, the only child and sole heir of her father, had married a relative of the same name, and, as it turned out, had married unfortunately. Albert Leslie, a penniless spendthrift, had wooed her from mercenary motives alone, leaving for that purpose a girl who loved him devotedly, and whom he loved as well as it was possible for him to love. The girl broke her heart for him, but did not die. She was reserved for worse. She married soon after in obedience to his wish, and at the end of the first year was a widow with one child, a young son. Gossip said that Mrs. Leslie had good reason for her jealousy of the fond and pretty widow, who could not bring herself to entirely discourage the attentions of her former lover, even when the world looked on with a suspicious eye.

Such things did not add to Mrs. Leslie's happiness nor to her amiability, for she was not a woman to tamely submit to wrong or insult, or to countenance vice from a mistaken and most pernicious notion of Christian patience. When she knew that her money often went to buy presents for her rival, she did not believe that wifely duty or true charity required her to be silent; and when her husband came home to her tipsy, as he often did, she did not receive him with a kiss. When, having led her eighteen miserable years, he died, if she wept at all, it was that she should find his death a relief, dreary weeping that she was denied not only happiness, but a tender sorrow which could find comfort in the future. For Mrs. Leslie did not desire to meet her husband again, even in heaven.

But, at the time we speak of, Mr. Leslie was yet living, and for a few months after.

There were but three children, the youngest a poor little cripple, the second an idiot, both telling but too plainly what their mother's life had been; but the eldest was

the pride, and the one consolation of the mother's heart.

Marian Leslie was a girl of whom any mother might be proud—bright, beautiful, talented, and with a character of her own. She had not seen her mother's misery and her father's unworthiness for so many years, without learning that life has thorns, as well as flowers, and without learning, too, to wear a smiling face often when her heart was sorest.

Fortunately, Mrs. Leslie was not a weak woman, and her high spirit saved the daughter many a pang which she would have suffered had she seen her mother cast down.

Mrs. Leslie had wealthy relatives in the metropolis, and at the time the Hazeltines found and adopted their young heir, Marian Leslie was away from home visiting one of them. She remained with them during the summer, travelling to mountains, lakes and falls, then, when winter came, settled herself for a gay season in town. She had written offering to come home, fearing that her mother might be lonely; but Mrs. Leslie knew too well the advantage of the girl's present position to allow such a sacrifice.

Before the winter was over she had proof of the wisdom of her plan for her daughter's settlement. First came letters from her cousin's wife, detailing Marian's triumphs in society, then mention of a very desirable match which seemed to be awaiting her acceptance, and lastly, the triumphant announcement that Mr Edward Phillips had proposed for Marian's hand. To be sure, the letter added, Marian did not seem to appreciate the honor as she might, and was very cool and capricious with the gentleman, and even intimated to her friends her intention to refuse him, when the time he had given her to think the matter over should have expired. But they had no doubt it was mere girlish arrogance, and that everything would end according to their hopes, since it was very evident that, aside from the lure of his worldly position, Marian was really pleased with the gentleman.

In the midst of these interests, Marian received a hasty summons home. Her father was dangerously ill, and could scarcely recover.

"My poor child!" exclaimed her lover, when she told him the news, with tears streaming over her pale cheeks. "You must allow me to go with you. I cannot suffer you to go alone, or without me. Tell

me that I may take this journey with you, and comfort and take care of you."

"O no!" she said, hastily, "I cannot let you go now. Cousin Margaret is going with me, and if my father is worse, Cousin Henry will follow us. I thank you, but it would not be best you should go now."

Indeed, the gentleman perceived instantly that it was scarcely the time to present himself to Marian's family, and he could not be hurt by her hasty denial when he felt her lean wearily against his arm, felt that she clung to him in her sorrow. Surely this looked like love.

"You will write to me, darling?" he asked, tenderly smoothing the curls that clustered about her fair forehead.

"Yes," sighed Marian, pressing her cheek against his breast.

"And after a little while you will let me follow you?"

"Yes," sighed Marian again; then, instantly comprehending how much her promise implied, a painful blush poured over her face, and half withdrew from him, stammering, "I do not know, that is, I must ask my mother. I can promise nothing."

"Would you like to see me again if your mother were willing?" he asked, gravely, his sudden hope chilled as suddenly.

Marian raised her eyes to his face, and her breast heaved with a long weary moan. Those lustrous dark eyes did not droop under the steady gaze of his blue ones, seemed, indeed, scarcely aware of it. While her eyes dwelt on the pale and noble face that bent over her, her thoughts seemed to look far beyond it, to past or future, looking steadily in the face dark experiences or darker anticipations. Perhaps the girl remembered her mother's bitter disappointment in life, and, her own father having been false, doubted if any other man could be true. Perhaps she was asking herself if this man on whose breast she leaned, whose eyes and lips spoke love, would ever turn in scorn and hatred from her. It may be that she wondered if she herself could love him as he required, or if he would not shrink from connection with a girl whose father had had such a bad name. Probably it was some thought of her father's worthlessness that made her color change, and herself draw back again from the arm that held her.

"You cannot say that you care ever to see me again?" he exclaimed. "O Marian!"

"I can say it!" she cried, seeming to

rouse herself from a trance. "I cannot think of never seeing you again!"

Thrilled with delight by her sudden ardor, he clasped her clinging form in his arms. And thus "Cousin Margaret," entering the room unexpectedly, found them.

"This poor child!" she said, making the best of her intrusion, having too much delicacy to intimate that anything extraordinary had happened, or that she considered herself *de trop*. "We are to start early in the morning. I hope that the danger may have been exaggerated, but we ought not to delay."

"I have been proposing myself for company," Mr. Philips said, still holding Marian's hand, while he took a seat beside her. "But Marian convinced me at once that I had better not go now. I hope, though, that I may be allowed to go the first stage and see you change cars, since you are to have no gentleman."

"Certainly!" Mrs. Allyn said, highly gratified at the state of affairs. "As you say, under the circumstances, it would be pleasanter for you to make Cousin Agatha's acquaintance at some other time. In sickness there is always distress and confusion in a house, and we would all rather your first impression should be pleasant."

Marian sat between them scarcely seeming aware of what they said, her hand resting in that of her lover, and her eyes still with that far-away look. While they spoke, her father might be dying. She looked on all the present as a dream, and tried to imagine what was transpiring in her home. With all his faults, the sick man was her father, and had ever showed her the fondness which he denied his wife. Besides, there is sometimes a keener pang in parting from an unworthy friend, than in parting from one on whose grave we can lay, along with our sorrow, the tribute of our love and respect. It is a consolation to be able to praise our dead, and misery to be obliged to blush for them.

The next morning the two started on their journey, accompanied the first half of the way by Edward Philips. Marian said but little to him, and scarcely noticed him till they were about to part, then she clung to his hand with sudden passion, and leaned from the window looking back as long as she could see him where he stood on the platform, till the cars were out of sight. His strength and his tenderness were such

a support, that it seemed to her she could not stand without them.

"Never mind!" said her cousin, intending to comfort. "He can come as soon as your father is better, as I hope he soon will be."

Marian, who had quite forgotten that she was not alone, quickly dried her tears and steadied her mouth. She was not wont to betray her feelings, and least of all would she desire to do so before her worldly-minded cousin.

Mrs. Allyn's hope that Mr. Leslie might soon get better was not realized. He grew worse instead, and died in a few days after his daughter's return.

Even in this trying hour the family were destined to a new and less bearable trial. Mrs. Wisnor, Mr. Leslie's early love, having been kept from him during his illness, forced her way to him after his death, and fairly startled them by her display of frantic grief. It needed the haughty and cold determination of Mrs. Allyn to rout her.

"He was mine, and he is mine!" she cried, throwing herself upon the lifeless body.

"I am quite aware that you are reputed to have a claim on my cousin," said Mrs. Allyn, sneeringly. "But this house is Mrs. Leslie's, and unless you leave it instantly, the servants will be called to put you out. My family are not in the habit of receiving such guests."

"When the funeral was over, Mrs. Allyn broached the subject of Marian's supposed engagement, and announced her conviction that it would be highly proper to allow Mr. Philips to visit them immediately. The girl needed cheering up, and Cousin Agatha would herself be better for some new interest.

Mrs. Leslie sat and listened in silence to her cousin's long and complacent exposition of affairs, and while she does so, we may look at her.

Marian's mother was physically but a larger and older model of Marian herself. The tall and somewhat grandly developed form showed what the girl's slight figure might become; the large dark eyes and waving brown hair were Marian's own. But into the mother's locks threads of silver were creeping, and the eyes were, perhaps, something harder. Moreover, where Marian's face was a lovely oval, and full of rich bright color when the girl was in health,

mental and bodily, Mrs. Leslie's face was thin and perfectly white, and still further unlike from a stern look, almost amounting to a frown, on the brows. Marian's smile, too, sprang bright and sudden, even under her tears, and lingered for minutes, sometimes, fading slowly, like the bow from the clouds; but her mother's smile was more pitiful than tears, and broke off suddenly at some sharp thought always at hand to blight any momentary pleasure. Marian's manners, too, were fitful and impulsive, her mother's cold and stately.

"So you see," concluded Mrs. Allyn, "it is as well to permit him to come at once."

"Describe to me this man's character," said Mrs. Leslie, in a cold sententious manner.

Cousin Margaret shrugged her shoulders. "I have been telling you, Agatha. He is considered highly honorable, and indeed, a pattern of morality. His notions are, if anything, too strict in these careless days. He is a gentleman in mind as well as in person, and very well educated. Of course, one would expect that. You know the Phillips are one of our best families. He is generous and indulgent towards those he loves, who are, I confess, not legion; for he is somewhat fastidious in his tastes. He will make the best husband in the world for Marian, for he adores her. He had got to be a little skeptical about women, I fancy. Our city girls are so bold, you know. But Marian's innocent freshness captivated him at once. It was a study to see him watch her flickering color—Marian has the most enchanting blush—and that solemn, trance-like look she sometimes puts on, like the deep earnest gaze of an infant, when you wonder what it is thinking of."

"He is wealthy, and would have no relatives to peer and order about Marian's house?" asked the mother, her face perfectly immovable during this glowing account.

"His relatives are not the persons to peer, and he has himself told me that he thought a husband and wife were unwise to take even near relatives into their family. He is wealthy, too, enough to live in handsome style on the interest of his money. His house is a fine large one, a little old-fashioned, but all the more aristocratic on that account. It is quite different from the lath-and-plaster palaces which are springing up like mushrooms, and are inhabited by people whose names were not known out of

their own low circles ten years ago. There is beautiful old china in that house, and there are some fine paintings and carvings, and the furniture is such as you do not find in the market now—solid oak, mahogany, and rosewood, all grown black with age, and as bright as a mirror, though there is not a particle of varnish on it. Some of it is carved to a perfect lacework, and cushioned with rich old tapestry wrought by some grandmother Phillips long since dead. O, you would be delighted with the house, Agatha."

"Tell me how he looks," was the next question of the cool inquisitor.

"They would make the handsomest couple in the world!" said the cousin. "Mr. Phillips is tall, not stout, but robust enough to have a stately air, and is fair. I like one to be fair if the other is dark. He is handsome, too, with regular well-shaped features, and a true patrician mouth. You might say that he looks a trifle too proud, if that can be, but once see him smile on Marian, and you would be satisfied."

Mrs. Leslie thought a while, then said, quietly, "When you write, you may say that I would be happy to see him."

At the end of a week, Mr. Edward Phillips stepped from a carriage and opened the gate in front of Mrs. Leslie's house, and the next instant saw two ladies in black standing in the door, even coming down the steps to welcome him. One was Mrs. Allyn, and the other his beautiful Marian, her cheeks glowing rose-red, and a welcoming smile parting her lips.

"You are glad to see me?" he asked, eagerly, taking her extended hand.

"Yes!" she said, simply, but with such heartiness that there was no need of more.

Mrs. Leslie sat in her parlor waiting for her visitor, her face paler than ever, if possible. And yet, when she heard his step approach, a burning blush swept her face, and the hands folded in her lap trembled. She controlled herself again before he appeared, and rose to meet him in her own stately fashion, when Marian blushing presented him.

One swift searching look, then she dropped her eyes as she welcomed him, and her brow slightly contracted as though with pain. It may be that she felt a momentary jealousy of this man who was to take her only daughter away from her, or perhaps, she contrasted her own dark fate with the

brilliant prospects of Marian. Certainly no one could look at this man and believe that he was capable of ruining a woman's happiness, or wooing where he did not love.

There was no denying him. Before he had been in the house a week, every obstacle had been set aside, and Marian had named the wedding-day for the first of June, it being then March. I say Marian had named it, but it had really been Mrs. Leslie, Marian utterly refusing to decide anything by herself.

Then Mr. Phillips went joyfully home to make what preparations he found necessary, and Mrs. Allyn accompanied him, in a gentle fever about Marian's dress. For although Marian was in black, still, black for a bride admitted of many variations, the lady concluded, and since the color was monotonous, there was all the more need that the material and make should be particularly elegant.

"Your mother will miss you," Mrs. Hazeltine said, when Marian made her first visit to that lady.

"Yes," the girl answered, sadly. "I really wished to stay at home till fall, but she would not let me. I fancy she thought she could get along better without me in the summer. Then in the fall she can visit me."

"You will be married in church?" was the next remark.

"Yes, we have decided so. You know we could not make a wedding so soon after father's death. Besides, by being married in church and starting directly, we escape a good deal of parade and ceremony. I acknowledge I dread congratulations and good wishes. They always make me feel like crying."

"But you will have to be married in your travelling-dress," said Mrs. Hazeltine, regretfully.

"Yes, I prefer that."

"O Marian, I shall go and scold your mother for consenting to that!" exclaimed her friend. "You would be such a lovely bride! I think young girls should always be married in white and a veil. It wouldn't be so bad, even, if it were winter; but June! 'You would look like a June rose, dear!'" said the lady, with whom Marian was a favorite.

"I couldn't! I couldn't!" murmured the girl, bending over the babe which she was holding in her lap. "A decked-out bride

gets stared at so. It is as though they make a show of themselves; isn't it, Francy?" patting the boy's dimpled cheeks with her white fingers.

The child laughed and caught at the slender fingers with his chubby ones.

"Baby knows," said Marian, kissing him till her heavy brown curls overflowed his face and head, and hid them both in a fragrant and shining veil.

"O naughty Frank!" cried Mrs. Hazeltine, as the child grasped with strong unscrupulous hands that floating wealth of tresses; and, laughingly extricating him, she took him into her own arms.

Marian gave him up without ado, fond as she had grown to be of him. She was too much engrossed in her own affairs to think of him, or of anything else much.

### CHAPTER III.

"Mine, all mine! and for love, not duty, Duty, the servant, holds the keys,  
But love, the master, walks in and out  
Of his goodly chambers with song and shout,  
Just as he please, just as he please!"

It was evening, and Mrs. Leslie was alone in her own chamber. She had herself packed all Marian's trunks, had carefully laid out the elegant travelling suit which was also to be the bridal dress; and had had a long chat with Cousin Henry's wife and daughter in their own room. Marian was down stairs with her lover, and the others had concluded to go to bed without bidding them good-night, feeling pretty sure that they might hope for pardon for the omission.

The mother did not undress, but sat pale and silent before her dressing-table, thinking or waiting. Presently she heard the street door open, and knew that the two were saying their lingering good-night on the steps. Then the door was softly closed, and, after a moment, Marian's light step came up the stairs. The mother listened to it with a face that contracted with pain. It was the last time that step would come up the stairs for many a day, perhaps forever.

"Poor little child!" murmured the mother, with bitter anguish. "She is but a child, scarcely seventeen years old. May her life be happier than mine has been!"

The door softly opened, and Marian stood in it pale and trembling.

"What is the matter?" asked her mother, in a startled tone.

"Nothing, mother," the girl answered, closing the door after her. Then she came and stood before her mother, mute, but with tears raining over her cheeks, and clasped hands raised in entreaty.

"Marian!" exclaimed Mrs. Leslie, in a tone of angry command.

"Mother, it is not too late!" whispered the girl. "Shall I marry him?"

"It is too late!" was the vehement answer—"too late for anything but to kill me. To retreat now would be disgrace."

One long look they gave each other, then Marian took a step, and fell into her mother's arms. She was held there in a brief straining embrace, then put away.

"Go to bed now, child, and try to sleep, and don't let there be any talk of partings and good-bys. It will be hard enough for me to lose you without being obliged to talk it over. Don't say good-by to-morrow, either. I couldn't bear it."

"Mother, mayn't I stay with you to-night?" whispered Marian.

The mother hesitated a moment, then said, "I think it best not, dear. We should only disturb each other. Good-night!"

Marian kissed her mother again, and, with a sigh, went obediently away to her own room, while the mother was left to bear her agony, alone and unseen.

If Marian expected to have a private marriage, she was greatly disappointed, for her arrangements had become public by some means, as such things always do; and instead of the dozen of friends who were to meet them at the church, they found the building crowded, and it was with some difficulty that the dozen invited were able to get in.

Of course the bride was lovely in spite of her unbridal-like suit of lavender and black, and though she was far enough from being the pure rose Mrs. Hazeltine had prophesied; on the contrary, she was more like a lily, pale and heavy with dews. But she smiled as she turned to receive such congratulations as the place permitted.

"Good-by," "good-by," came from many a careless lip, and was as carelessly answered; but Marian only kissed her mother in silence, not daring to utter a word.

"Be kind to my child, sir!" said Mrs. Leslie, grasping her son-in-law's extended hand, and looking at him with eyes that were almost threatening.

"May God deal with me as I cherish my

wife!" he said, solemnly. "You need not fear for her, mother!"

That title, given by him now for the first time, fell like a sweet assurance on both mother and daughter, seeming to draw the three into nearer and more trustful union. He was now their own. They smiled into each other's faces, then bride and bridegroom took their seats in the carriage, and in a few minutes were whirled out of sight.

#### CHAPTER IV.

"If the bud is fair to see,  
Think what must the blossom be."

If Mrs. Leslie had harbored any fears for her daughter's future, they must have been short-lived. Never was a wife more tenderly cared for, or more proudly presented to the world. And it must be said that Marian did credit to her husband's choice.

Mrs. Leslie visited them in the fall, and went home with a load taken off her heart.

Moreover, when another summer came, there appeared in the home-nest a little girl, tiny and perfect as a fairy, to glad the hearts of father and mother. The child had none of its mother's ruddy dark beauty, which, in its rich luxuriance, reminded one of roses in full bloom. The little thing was slender and pearly in tints, with eyes of purest blue, and hair scarcely deep-hued enough to be called golden, being rather a sunny silver color.

"I wish you had given her your eyes, Marian," said the husband, being enamored over the exquisite little creature.

"How can you find fault with such a *bijou*?" smiled the wife, stroking the fair locks of the head that was bowed over the child's cradle.

He looked up with a fond smile. "I am trying to find a fault where I know that none exists," he said, "because I fear that my happiness is too perfect."

The beautiful invalid leaned back in her chair, full of a sweet content. He took a seat beside her, leaning to caress the soft cheek as he spoke with tender earnestness.

"If you had seen more of the world and its deceits, little wife, you could better understand why my happiness seems to me too great and precious to last. I have lived eleven years longer than you have, and have seen and known things that could never have come to your knowledge. I have seen deceit and corruption in the fairest-seeming

homes. I have known women who married with lies on their lips, pledging the hand where the heart could not follow. I have known—"

But here he stopped abruptly, for, without a sigh even, Marian melted forward on to his bosom, insensible.

"How careless I was to talk of such painful things when she is so weak!" he said, as he watched her slowly recovering. "I have no right ever to pain her sensitive spirit with them. Ah! look up, little wife, and forgive my sombre talk."

She smiled upon him faintly, and turned her cheek to the pillow. "I am tired, dear. Please let me sleep."

"I must be more careful of her," he thought, going softly out. "It must be that I am too grave and too bitter. Why else does she sometimes turn from me with that weary air? There are times when it seems as if she would gladly escape me."

He sighed as he sat alone, thinking. He feared that Marian found him too old for her. He missed that sweet open confidence which he had hoped for and expected. Not that he believed she would conceal anything from him, but he feared that she often shut up her feelings in her own heart, doubting if they would meet his sympathy.

Having married so early, Mrs. Phillips did not consider her education finished, and her husband gladly encouraged her tastes, and provided masters. Her crude school-girl French and German would scarcely serve her in the European tour which they were contemplating; so, masters in their languages attended her twice a week.

But music was Marian's forte, and her husband was himself too fond of that art, and was too proud of his wife's magnificent voice, not to give her every advantage. It seemed almost a pity, as her instructor said, that such a voice should be hidden in private life.

"Madam should be a poor woman, with a family to support," said Signor Stradella. "It is hiding her talent in a napkin."

"Not if it please my husband and child, signor," said his blushing pupil.

The Italian raised his eyebrows. To him such hiding of gifts for love's sake was a problem. Rather let the world praise, that the loved one may be proud of you, he thought.

It was not long before the signor had the

opportunity he coveted to display his pupil. The first soprano in the church they attended was taken suddenly ill on Sunday morning, and, as the choir was a quartet, they were at their wits' ends. It was then, that, hearing of their dilemma, Mr. Phillips proposed that his wife should take the place of the absent singer. The offer was joyfully and thankfully accepted, and Marian, for the first, but not for the last time, raised her voice for a crowded audience. Face after face was turned to be baffled by the veiled curtains of the choir, as that rich voice rang through the vaulted arches of the church, and the husband sat thrilling with pride and delight at the effect of his wife's rare gift. He little thought that the time would come when he would tremble with anguish while the crowd applauded that same beloved voice.

The European tour had been put off from time to time, but at length, when the little girl, Lily, was four years old, it was decided on. Their house was closed, and Marian took her child and went home to her mother's for a short visit, before starting on their journey. It was her first visit since her marriage, and she renewed with eager interest all her old associations.

"I didn't know I was so fond of my old home, and of the people, till I had been separated from them," she said to Mrs. Hazeltine, when that lady came to see her. "But I seem to love even the fences, and the old houses."

Mrs. Hazeltine, whose face the last six years had scarcely changed, smiled gently upon the beautiful young matron. "I sometimes think," she said, "that we seldom see places or people rightly till we have seen them at a distance."

Their conversation was interrupted by peals of childish laughter, and Lily came running into the room, followed by Frank Hazeltine, who was chasing and pelting her with roses.

"O my son—my son! You mustn't be so rude in other people's houses," said Mrs. Hazeltine, softly, drawing the boy to her side to smooth the tumbled dark curls from his moist forehead.

Lily ran to hide under her mother's wing, peeping out with an air half shy half inviting on her young pursuer, who regarded her with dancing dark eyes, his round face all flushed with exercise, and brimming over with health, spirit and mischief.



"My dear Marian, Frank looks far more like me than Lily does like you," Mrs. Hazeltine said, wiping his warm face with her handkerchief.

"So I think," said Marian, smiling. "But I think Lily grows to look more like me. Her mouth is mine, and her hair curls like mine, though it is fair."

"Lily is a fairy!" said Mrs. Hazeltine, holding her hand to the child.

"And Frank is a young prince," laughed Marian, laying her white hand among the boy's dark curls. "I fancy that he rules you royally at home."

"Well, yes," said Mrs. Hazeltine, with a sigh of proud content. "I am afraid Master Frank has not many of his wishes denied him. He is the only one, you know, and, from first to last in the house, he is petted. If I were to attempt any denial, some one else would give him what I refuse."

Marian toyed with the moist curls, and looked into the boy's lustrous eyes, as he leaned on her lap and watched her with an earnest steadfast gaze. He seemed to have taken a great fancy to this fair and blooming lady, and forgot his play to lean and cling about her. He played with the slender white fingers, and turned the rings about on them; he reached to touch with shy fingers her heavy curls; he watched her sweet mouth when she spoke, and ran to do her slightest bidding.

"I am almost jealous of you," Mrs. Hazeltine said, as she took leave. "The child seems really to be bewitched with you."

Marian smiled, and slow tears came into her eyes which took a far-away look. The deep bloom on her cheeks softened as she bent over the child, laid her hand on his head, and kissed him solemnly, as though her kiss were given to the dead. Then, as those dark earnest eyes were lifted gravely to hers, she drew the boy almost passionately to her bosom, and kissed him on mouth, cheeks and forehead.

"The involuntary affection of a child is something pathetic," she said, hastily. "I always feel grieved when a child takes a fancy to me, I don't know why. And Frank has such a solemn look in his eyes it makes me feel like crying. Besides," she added, more lightly, "such a sweet mouth was made to be kissed." And she kissed him again, smiling.

She would have said to another, that the

pathos in the child's look was as though he missed, amid all his tender rearing, the love that should have been his, and was looking everywhere for his lost mother's face.

But she would not for worlds have breathed such a thought to the one who had so fondly and jealously reared him.

## CHAPTER V.

*"O breathe not his name; let it rest in the shade,  
Where, cold and dishonored, his relics are laid!"*

THERE was one family whom Marian longed to hear about, but did not dare mention to her mother. Since the day of her father's death, when Mrs. Wisnor had invaded their house to indulge her insolent grief, she had heard no word of her.

After much hesitation she asked Mrs. Hazeltine, on whose friendship and discretion she could depend.

"O, Mrs. Wisnor and son are travelling in Europe," Mrs. Hazeltine said, in a careless tone, and looking away that she might not see the questioner's embarrassment. For the scandal about this woman and Marian's father had been too notorious for any one to even pretend ignorance.

"Clark Wisnor fell heir to a large property through his father," the lady went on, "and as they were not very popular here, they concluded to go elsewhere to spend it. Clark ran away, you know, some years ago, and there was a report that he was drowned. But when the fortune was talked of he made his appearance. He is a worthless fellow, and I'm glad he's out of the town. The only good I know of him is his love for his mother."

"Gone to Europe!" echoed Marian, blankly. "I hope we shan't meet them."

"It isn't likely that you will," Mrs. Hazeltine said, soothingly. "Europe is a large country. But if you do meet them, my dear, don't let that worry you. They would never have the effrontery to speak to you. If they do, all you have to do is to raise your head and not know them."

Up before Marian Phillips's eyes started a picture of the last time she had seen Clark Wisnor. It was years before, but again she seemed to stand leaning, half fainting, on some one who grasped rather than supported her. At a little distance

was Clark Wisnor, a handsome youth but little more than a year older than herself, struggling in the grasp of her father, who, white with rage, held him by the throat. Before them knelt Mrs. Wisnor, who wept and tried to free her son from Mr. Leslie's grasp. Then, with an oath, the youth had been flung back, and Mr. Leslie had turned to catch Marian just as she melted away into insensibility.

In those days Clark Wisnor had been Marian's lover, known and encouraged by his mother, but unknown to Marian's parents till this explosion. Mr. Leslie might visit the mother, but he had no mind that his daughter should marry the son.

"I hope I shall never see them again!" Marian thought, as this vision faded, leaving her feeling faint and ill.

But for once, at least, her hope was disappointed, for one of the first persons she saw when they stepped on board the steamer at Havre for Trieste was Mrs. Wisnor.

The lady was looking at her, and smiled disagreeably as she turned to touch the arm of a gentleman who stood beside her looking into the water. He turned at the word, and Marian knew that Clark Wisnor was looking steadfastly at her.

She shook from head to foot, and leaned heavily on her husband's arm.

"We can have a fine view here," he said, leading her directly toward these two.

She walked unflinching past them, but she knew that her face was pallid, and that a fire had leaped to her eyes. For Mr. Philips, if he noticed the manner in which the lady and gentleman near him stared at his wife, forgot it the next moment. He was quite used to seeing Marian admired.

They sat a while looking off on the blue water, one of them seeing nothing, though she beheld this storied wave now for the first time. She was conscious only of a form that gradually edged nearer and nearer, till the light breeze blew the end of the scarf that hung on his arm against her sleeve. Her breath came in quick gasps, and the blood ran seething through her veins. She felt that she could not much longer restrain herself if she remained there, but she did not dare to retreat. She looked at her husband. Finding her disinclined to talk, he had fallen into a reverie, his head a little turned away.

"Marian!" was breathed softly in her ear.

In the calm of desperation she turned, and met Clark Wisnor's eyes. Beautiful eyes they were, gray, and bright, and long-lashed, and they sparkled with love and triumph.

"You dropped your handkerchief, madam," he said, presenting it to her with a significant glance.

Mr. Philips turned at the voice, and bowing profoundly, the young man walked away, followed by the husband's haughty glance.

"I think I will go to the stateroom to see how Lily gets along," Marian said, quietly. "Will you give me your arm, dear?"

Sending the nurse out to take the air with the child, Marian was left alone. As soon as they were gone she drew from her pocket the handkerchief, which was not hers, and unfolding it, opened the pencilled note she found within.

"I see that our destination is the same," it said. "And I see also that you do not wish to recognize us. I will not oblige you to, but I must see you on matters of the utmost importance. Write me a line, telling me where we can meet and talk undisturbed. Be sure it would not be well for you to miss what I have to say to you. I will see you here, or after we reach Trieste, as you please."

Lighting a match, Marian carefully burned the note, then threw the handkerchief out the window. As she did so she saw one standing just outside there on the deck. He sprang forward, seeming to think that the handkerchief contained a message for him. The wind caught it and blew it nearer the rail. He ran quickly to catch it before it should blow overboard. Marian drew back and pulled the curtain over her window. The next instant she heard a plunge in the water, followed by the cry that a man was overboard.

"O Heaven!" she murmured, trying not to be glad, shivering at herself, yet thrilling with a sense of unbounded relief. "O Heaven!" she repeated, again and again, listening breathlessly to every sound, hearing the wild cries of the mother, and after a while the lifting of a heavy body over the side of the steamer.

Coming in half an hour after, Mr. Philips found her lying in her berth with the curtains closed.

"There has been an accident, dear," he

said. "A man is drowned. It was the man who stared at you so, and who picked up your handkerchief."

"Drowned!" echoed Marian, turning her pale face toward his.

"Yes. Terrible, is it not? And an hour ago I was tempted to use my cane over his shoulders for his impudence to you. I tried to expiate by doing all I could for the poor fellow. But he was past cure. Something struck his head as he fell."

Marian shuddered and hid her face. "It will spoil the voyage," she said. "I don't wish to see the water again. Please have Lilly brought in; I am afraid to have her out."

"The nurse has her just outside the door, in the saloon," he said. Then added, "The young man's mother is on board, and is nearly frantic. She is an American woman."

Marian said nothing.

She kept her berth during the voyage, every moment trembling lest Mrs. Wisnor should send for her. But the bereaved mother, in her wild sorrow, seemed to have forgotten Marian, and was, indeed, scarcely sane. The ladies on board kindly did all they could for her, and when they reached Trieste took on themselves all preparations for the funeral of her son.

For Marian, she had but one thought—to get away from Trieste as quickly possible. The day after their arrival they started again.

This was the last time Marian ever saw Clark Wisnor, and well for her, better even than she knew. And she hung this last look beside the last remembered one, two tragical pictures, closely linked.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## MARIAN LESLIE'S HUSBAND:

—OR,—

### A WORM IN THE BUD.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

[This Story was commenced in the June Number of the Magazine.]

#### CHAPTER IV.

"O, our manhood's prime vigor, no spirit feels  
waste,  
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing, nor  
sinew unbraced.  
O, the wild joys of living! the leaping from  
rock up to rock—  
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree—  
the cool silver shock  
Of a plunge in the pool's living water,—"

THERE are certain places, and certain persons, which time seems to pass without touching, like clear and sunny rests of water that lie in curves in the banks of swiftly-running streams, and seem never to flow down on the current. Of these were the Hazeltines, husband and wife, and their homestead. Looking at them now, it seems impossible that twenty years have passed since the morning when their breakfast was interrupted by the advent of an unknown baby.

Mr. Hazeltine is one of those men who seem always about the same age—old-looking as young men, and young-looking as old men, a wiry alertness of form and motion, and a general grayness of color defeating all calculation as to his age. Small quick-moving gray eyes and a narrow beardless chin may look about the same at fifty or seventy. Then, Mrs. Hazeltine's fair fresh face was not one to fade early. Besides, her life had been peaceful and happy, and the smoothing hand of complacent content kept the wrinkles at bay. The house and grounds were unchanged, having been perfect of their kind, and one might fancy that it was the same canary, twittering among the same plants in the window, and the same impudent parrot in its gilded cage in the corner. But, alas! the birds were an institution, and not individuals, though Mrs. Hazeltine did drop a few gentle tears over the demise of each successive songster.

As for the unknown babe, you may hear him now, whistling as he descends the stairs, father and mother waiting till he shall come, before taking their seats at the breakfast-table.

The free elastic step might lead one to expect a boyish figure, but the young man who stands in the door, smiling a bright good-morning, looks to be twenty-five years old at the least. He had a fine height, was broad-shouldered and erect, without stiffness. A deep color glowed in the dusk of his handsome oval face, the dark-brown hair still clustered in mirthful rings about his forehead, and the thick short mustache assisted to increase his apparent age. But perhaps the finest feature of this young man was his eyes, their brown brilliancy showing like lustrous blackness through the long lashes which his mother had been at such pains to cultivate.

I do not pretend that Mr. Francis Hazeltine was a genius, or a notably intellectual person. Neither would I present him as a saint. But still less was he a commonplace fellow. Handsome, generous in feelings, high-principled, and with talents above the average, he would be both admired and respected in any circle in which he should move. The first impression he made upon the stranger was of high spirits and careless good-nature; but under these were deeper and stronger feelings than the mere superficial observer would have been likely to detect.

While we have described him, young Mr. Hazeltine has bidden his father good-morning, kissed his mother's cheek, and taken his seat at the table.

"We have concluded to go, Frank," Mrs. Hazeltine said, with a soft sigh breaking through her smile.

"You have!" he exclaimed, glancing quickly towards his father.

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Mr. Hazeltine nodded, and occupied himself with his breakfast.

"And so you're going to pull yourself up by the roots, and transplant, to follow my fortunes?" And the bright eyes of the speaker seemed to swim in a mist that was almost tears.

"Of course we would rather be with you," the mother said. "And of course we don't wish you to settle here in so small a place. And we may just as well move now and have you with us while you are preparing for your profession, as put it off, and move when you begin to practise."

For Frank was to be a physician, and was now about going to the city to hear medical lectures. Well he knew how deep must be that love that would break the ties and associations of a lifetime, rather than be separated from him; and he felt it strongly, though, humoring their mood, he affected to regard it as a matter of course. If there were traces of tears in the gentle eyes of his mother when she went about ordering the packing of furniture, and leaving out such things for sale as they did not care to take with them, he seemed not to see, though he showed her a tenderer and more thoughtful attention in consequence. If her lip quivered when taking leave of some old acquaintance, he would interpose a cheerful word, and a promise of soon meeting again.

"We are sure to see you, Mrs. Leslie," Frank said, "you visit Mrs. Phillips so frequently."

"O, my visiting days are about over," Mrs. Leslie said, in a manner that was none too cordial.

The young man had never been a favorite of hers, and with the first news of their removal, she had conceived an uneasy idea concerning him. Supposing that this fine-looking young son of nobody knew whom should take a fancy to Marian Phillips's proud daughter!

When she walked over her dismantled house for the last time, Mrs. Hazeltine at length gave way, and buried her face in her handkerchief with a burst of weeping.

"Dear mother?" Frank cried, putting his arm tenderly around her. "I was wrong to consent to your going."

"I cannot help it, Frank," she sobbed. "But don't think that I regret going. I would not change anything, but I am an old woman, and am not likely ever to see

this house again. I came here when I first married, and have lived a good many happy years under this roof. Those ties cling closer than we think."

"I trust that you will live a good many happy years under the roof to which you are going," he said, gently leading her away.

Mrs. Leslie, in writing to her daughter, made a brief mention of this intended removal, adding, in her peremptory way, "I hope that you will not be intimate with the Hazeltines. Not but I consider Mr. and Mrs. Hazeltine excellent and unexceptionable people; but Francis is not to my taste, and I think that if Mr. Phillips were aware of the circumstances of his birth, he would not desire him for a frequent visitor."

An advice which the daughter found sufficiently hard to comply with; for she was the only acquaintance Mrs. Hazeltine had in the city, and, feeling homesick and lonely at first, that lady desired to see her often. Besides, Mrs. Phillips considered her mother's prejudices unreasonable, and felt ill-disposed to submit to them. Frank she had not seen for several years, he having been away at college when she visited her mother; and she had no desire to punish the young man for the misfortune of his unknown parentage.

## CHAPTER VII

"A song of a nest:—

There once was a nest in a hollow,  
Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed,  
Soft and warm, and full to the brim;  
Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,  
With buttercup buds to follow."

THE Phillipses were not much afraid of the eyes of people, and, in consequence, any one passing their house in the evening, when they were at home, might see a very pleasant picture through the broad front window.

First, dimly visible, was a large front parlor, unlighted except by such light as came from the furthest room of the long suite. One got an impression of rich coloring and softness, of luxuriant chairs and sofas, of pictures leaning from velvet walls, and of mirrors separating and reflecting this deep-hued flowery softness, as waters part yet multiply flowery banks. There might be caught, here and there, glimpses of a heavy fold of drapery rolling out from

cornice or alcove, some white gleam of marble, bust, vase or slab, or a golden flame where some stray ray of light fell on the gilded clasp of a book. A lofty archway, with a slender pillar at either side, separated this room from one beyond, which was very similar, but more clearly seen, the nearer light striking sharply on cornice and picture frame, sinking warmly into crimson curtain or cushion, half revealing some pictured face that seemed to breathe in that soft unsteady light, and to look with luminous spirit-like eyes.

Beyond this room was a third, all light and warmth, and, on the night we choose, a charming group was framed in the wide door. A wood fire flickered in the grate, for it was September, and the evenings were getting cool, and in one corner sat Mr. Phillips, in dressing-gown and slippers, reading the evening paper. The light from the shaded lamp at his elbow lay strongly on his handsome mouth and chin, and sparkled in the long tawny-colored beard, which he had a habit of occasionally smoothing down with a white and well-shaped hand. The upper part of the face was in shadow, that softened the look of the wide forehead, and deepened the hue of his auburn hair.

Opposite Mr. Phillips, and directly before the fire, that spread its glowing background for her, sat his wife, her profile to the window, her perfectly-developed and finished beauty defined and displayed by the broad bright flames. The outline of her features looked almost childish, so delicate were they; for Mrs. Phillips's commanding air was in her eyes, brow and figure. A dress of soft wool, emerald-green, came close to wrists and throat, and from that shone her dazzling hands and rosy blossom of a face. She had never left off curls, in or out of fashion, and now they drooped and clung, and wound in loose large rings all about the ivory comb that held them in place.

At a little distance from these two sat Lily Phillips, a girl like her name. If you were to change a pond lily to a girl, you would make such a girl as this. Pale and delicate, with a rich waxen whiteness, a heavy braid of golden hair at the back of her drooping head; light and slight of form, with easy floating motions, with small pink lips, and eyes of clear gray, like waters faintly shadowed. Envious people liked to remark what a foil to her mother's superb and blooming beauty this slip of a pale girl

was. For it was past a doubt that Mrs. Phillips was the beauty of the town. Young belles tapped with their heels, and tried to smile, while their escorts held them back to let Mrs. Phillips pass in or out, looking to catch a glance or a nod from her as she stepped by with such stately grace. Dashing dames bit their lips, to see the gentle coolness with which she received an adulation which all their complacency could not win; and that when their efforts had banished her from any conspicuous place, her obscurity immediately attracted all that they would so gladly have attached to themselves.

Do not imagine that Mrs. Phillips was a belle. She would have rejected such a title with indignant disdain. No airs of a coquette, no vain flutter ever soiled the pure dignity of her character. The admiration which she excited was such as her husband could be proud of, and no twinge of jealousy ever marred his confidence in her. She was a star rather than a belle, and attracted by higher charms than crimson cheeks or beautiful hands.

Others than the reader have looked on this family group. A gentleman paused for a minute on the sidewalk to look in, then went up the steps and rang the bell. In a few minutes Mr. Frank Hazeltine was shown into the room. Mr. Phillips looked up from his paper, smiling an easy welcome; his wife rose to offer her fair hand, and Miss Lily, with a faint pink over her whiteness, rose, bowed slightly, without lifting her eyes, then resumed her seat and her netting.

"I expected to find father and mother here," the young man said.

"Were they coming round?" Mrs. Phillips asked, giving him a seat beside herself, and suffering her eyes to dwell on his handsome spirited face.

"Yes, that was their intention at supper-time. I had to go out for an hour, and promised to call for them. Some one must have come in."

"O," said Lily, "the Allyns were to call there this evening. Cousin Fred said so today. Uncle George has no other time but evenings, and he wanted to see Mr. Hazeltine."

The blush deepened on Lily's cheek, while she spoke, for Frank Hazeltine always looked at and listened to her more earnestly than he was aware. Besides,

among "the Allyns" was one whom Lily was beginning to have a little uneasy feeling about. Her cousin Alice, a fair proud girl, noticeable for her cool graceful ways, was too charming, when she chose, to be trusted in the society of a gentleman whom she might think worth pleasing. Not that Lily objected to Mr. Hazeltine's being pleased with Alice—O no!—but then Alice was a bit of a coquette, and mamma thought a good deal of the Hazeltines, and would not like Frank to be treated ill, and—well, after all, what did she care? He could look out for himself. Mr. Phillips laid aside his paper.

"What do you think of your father going into business with Mr. Allyn?" he asked. "It seems that they are talking about it."

"I like it," the young man answered, decidedly. "Father would never exist without business. He is too active, and if his energies were not otherwise employed, they would wear himself out."

"Yes," Mrs. Phillips said, smiling. "We used to say that we didn't believe Mr. Hazeltine ever slept, he was so constantly moving when he was awake, and seemed so unwearied. Is it true that you are going into Dr. Lawrence's office?"

"Yes; I am fortunate. He says that he is getting too old for practice, and wants an assistant. Nothing could be better; though if I had been obliged to work my way, I would not have complained. But I shall learn so much from him."

A few words more, then Mr. Hazeltine recollected that if there was company at home, it behooved him to pay his respects to them without delay.

"Stay one moment, and take a letter out to post for me," Mrs. Phillips said. "I had almost forgotten it, and I want mother to get it to-morrow evening. I have but to direct it."

She went to her escritoire, and, before enclosing the letter, glanced over it, to see if anything was omitted. Having done so, she glanced back toward the group around the fire. The young man was telling something that had happened to him that day, speaking in a spirited way that was natural to him, and the other two were listening. Mr. Phillips leaned back, and listened with a slight smile playing around his mouth, evidently pleased with the speaker, and Lily looked with her heart in her eyes, and a flickering blush and smile coming and going.

Mrs. Phillips hesitated a moment. Her mother had inquired about the Hazeltines, and she had not mentioned them in her letter. As Mrs. Leslie grew older, she grew more difficult to deal with. She was nervous and positive about trifles, and sometimes her daughter was almost alarmed at her strange manner. She acted like a person in whose mind some wearing secret lay, disturbing every other thought, and investing trifles with an importance which did not belong to them.

She was jealous and watchful of her daughter's associates, questioning her about them in a manner that would have been very provoking if it had not been almost childish. She was particularly uneasy about the Hazeltines, seeming to almost hate them, and merely, it would appear, because Mrs. Phillips liked them.

Mrs. Phillips paused now, with her pen in her hand. Should she answer her mother's questions, or seem to have forgotten them? The hesitation was but momentary. With a slight expression of vexation on her face, she added a postscript.

"I am sorry that your wishes regarding the Hazeltines cannot be regarded. Naturally they come to us, and do not dream of our avoiding them. It is impossible to do so, without appearing very strangely. Indeed, it is impossible to do so at all, without acquainting Lily and her father with your wishes. They both like the family very much, and would certainly think your feeling a very unreasonable one. Besides, I may as well tell you, it looks as though the two young people have a liking for each other. And what objection could be made? I must really beg you, dear mother, to give up this hope of making the two families strangers to each other. I could not accomplish it if I would."

Still with that look of annoyance on her face, the lady sealed her letter, and turned to the others. The three were standing, and Frank Hazeltine's stalwart graceful figure showed nobly in the full light. The tossed shining hair, the brilliant eyes, the flashing smile, all made up a captivating person. What could be the secret of her mother's dislike to him? She stood an instant looking intently at him, then, moving forward, caught her husband's eye. She blushed as she did so, and dropped her own.

"Your letter ready?" asked the gentle-

man, looking down on her from his height, and dwelling with involuntary admiration on her face. All his life long this lady had been a sort of idol of his, niched like a goddess, fair and blooming, in his childhood, and but descending from her niche to assume a throne, as he grew to manhood. Of all the women he had seen, he had never admired any other as he did Mrs. Philips, and now something protecting and superior had crept into his homage. He was so manly, and she so well-preserved, that her sixteen years of seniority were scarcely perceptible. She might be an elder sister. At all events, she was a lady and he a gentleman now, not as once—she a lady, and he a child at her knee.

The young man was a little disconcerted to find Mr. Philips looking keenly at him when he raised his eyes, which that gaze seemed to demand, and it was with a slight confusion that he took the letter.

"You can drop it into the box at the corner," she said; and even as she spoke, with the subject of her mother's unaccountable aversion in her mind, some spark leaped through a chain of apparent trifles in her memory, setting them all ablaze with a hateful possibility. Her father's connection with Mrs. Wisnor, her mother's jealousy, the scandal concerning them, some of which had reached her ears, the mysterious birth of this young man, and, lastly, the resemblance which more than one person had remarked between her and himself. Could that be the reason of her mother's aversion? Was Frank Hazeltine her father's son?

As the thought flashed through her mind, a crimson flush dyed her whole face, and her head drooped with shame and distress. Mr. Hazeltine did not see it, but Mr. Philips did, and, turning towards him, as their visitor bowed himself out the door, she saw a spark of startled fire in the eyes that were fixed on her. It died on the instant, for Mr. Philips trusted his wife, and knew her to be too familiar with admiration to be moved at an admiring glance from this young man, or from any other, unless the admiration should be open enough to excite her displeasure.

Involuntarily the wife went to her husband's side, and stood an instant leaning on his arm. There was her refuge from all the cares of life. There was always a deep and faithful tenderness. She did not look at him, but gazed dreamily into the fire, while

his eyes dwelt on her face. Then she thought, "How foolish and wild my fancy was!" and, relieved by that thought, smiled up into the face bending gravely towards her, pressed his arm with a light caressing hand, and went to close and put away her escritoire.

Her husband looked after her, and sighed even while he smiled. How many moods and fits came over her, to which he had not the key! How many lights and shades passed over that loved and beautiful face, of which he knew not the source. How many times she had shrunk from a tender word of his, as though it hurt her, and seemed to dread those moments of confidential communion which should be sweetest to one who loved! And yet, he could not doubt that she loved him.

Neither of the two, engrossed in each other, had noticed Lily, who had not lost a look or turn of this by-play. She had sunk into her seat as their visitor went out, and from the shadow of a fire-screen had watched her mother. O, why was she so beautiful? Why must she herself forever be overshadowed by that glowing and superb presence? And what did that blush mean?

The girl pretended to be netting, when her mother came back to resume her seat, and bent so close to the fire to count her stitches that it burnt her face to a bright rose-color.

"You are burning your face, Lily," said her mother, who was as careful of her daughter's looks as of her own. "And I would rather you should not net in the evening. The steel is hurtful to the eyes, and you will feel it after a while."

"I don't feel it at all," Lily said, a little shortly.

"You will feel it in time," was the reply. "I request you to put away your netting."

"I want to finish it to-night," the girl said, going on with her work.

"Lily!" said her father, sternly, "you surprise me!"

With quivering lips, but an angry face, Lily put away her work, her mother sitting silent and displeased. It was so seldom that the girl had any will in opposition to her own, that Mrs. Philips was as much surprised as offended by her daughter's manner.

"Now," Mr. Philips said, when the work had been put away with very unnecessary



emphasis, "if you have no apology to make to your mother, I recommend that you go to your room."

Mrs. Phillips put out a deprecating hand towards her husband, but said nothing. She never interfered with his will, and, indeed, seemed to have a sort of terror of him, when he showed the stern side of his character.

Lily rose at this recommendation, made a scornful bow, and left the room in silence. The two looked at each other in surprise.

"What is the matter?" asked the mother.

"Some flirt of girlish temper, I suppose," was the careless answer.

But Mr. Phillips was seriously annoyed. He more than suspected the source of Lily's anger, and his blood warmed and quickened at the thought that she would dare to be jealous of her mother. He felt a momentary vexation, too, for that strange blush which the daughter as well as himself had seen. As he sat looking into the fire, silent and annoyed, a white hand was laid on his shoulder, as his wife stood beside him.

"I hate to see you frown," she whispered, "even when that frown is not for me. Forgive Lily's pettishness, and smile again."

He looked up, with a grave smile, into the lovely face bending so near.

"Why do you dread my frown so much?" he asked. "Do you fear me?"

"Sometimes I do," she said, sadly.

"When, Marian?"

"When I am afraid that I have displeased you, or that you misunderstand me," she answered, tears swimming in her beautiful eyes.

"One would think that I were in the habit of beating you," he said, smiling more brightly, as he drew the tremulous caressing hand into his own.

"An unkind look from you is worse than a blow would be," she said, with something like passion.

"My darling, am I ever unkind to you?" he exclaimed, drawing her nearer to himself.

She smiled through her tears, and all was sunshine again. But up stairs, the daughter lay on her bed, and sobbed in bitter anger. Did they think that she had no feeling—that she was a baby? she asked herself. Was she to be treated like a pettish child, when her heart was wrung?

"I believe he loves my mother!" she muttered, shivering at her own audacious thought. "And I believe that my mother—" She trembled, and dared go no further.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A few days after, there came a short and somewhat singular letter from Mrs. Leslie. She was not well, and would like to see her daughter. Would Marian come for a few days, and bring Lily with her? She wished very much to see them both.

"I am afraid that mother is very ill," Mrs. Phillips said to her husband. "It is so odd that she should request us to come in this way. She doesn't ask if it is convenient, or tell us to come soon, but requests us to come this week, as though she wanted no delay. I am afraid that she is very ill," she repeated, her face pale with alarm.

"Will you go at once?" her husband asked.

"Yes, certainly! We will start in the morning, Lily. Of course you can't go, Mr. Phillips?" she asked, wistfully.

"Not so soon. I wish that I could. Perhaps I might be able, if you felt like waiting a day."

"I do not dare," she replied. "We can go, and you follow and come back with us, if you can. I will telegraph you as soon as I get there, if there is anything particular the matter."

It was so arranged, and, on the next morning, Lily and her mother took the car. At the depot they met Frank Hazeltine, who joined them immediately.

"I heard last evening that you had been called away by your mother's illness," he said to Mrs. Phillips. "It was too late to go to your house, and I told mother that I would run over to the depot and inquire this morning. Is it anything serious?" he asked.

Marian was so preoccupied by anxiety for her mother, that she had no room for fancies regarding Frank Hazeltine, and her manner was just what it should have been, as she explained the case to him. She seemed in haste to get away, indeed, and took her husband's arm, leaving Lily to the young man. Lily breathed more freely, as she took the arm offered her, and stepped into the car. After all, how foolish she was!

"You will not stay long?" her escort asked.

"I do not know," Lily said, blushing faintly. "It will depend on how we find grandmother."

"Shall you remain as long as your mother does?" he asked, thinking he should miss their pleasant fireside group.

"I suppose so."

"I shall miss you," he said, in a low tone. "Don't stay long."

Without at all intending or suspecting it, the speaker used a tone and manner that might easily be mistaken for that of a lover, and, at sound of it, the girl's last doubt fled away.

The whistle sounded, the cars moved, and the two gentlemen stood looking after them while they were in sight, then turned away, and went homeward.

"I hope you don't mean to desert me, because I am alone," Mr. Philips said, as they parted. "Come up this evening."

Mrs. Leslie welcomed her daughter and Lily eagerly, and, though not looking well, was not nearly as ill as Mrs. Philips had expected to find her.

"I was really alarmed, mother," she said. "Edward told me that you could not have written yourself, if you had been very ill; but I got nervous, and could not be reassured."

"I was very anxious to see you," her mother replied, gravely. "I am glad you are come."

Marian slyly stole away, after a while, to write a note to her husband; and Lily tried hard to think that she had not been ill-used in being dragged away into the country, and away from home, and from—well, from Frank, she owed to herself, blushing, and all for her grandmother's whim, and her mother's groundless fears.

There was an effort made by all to appear cheerful that evening, but with ill success, and when Mrs. Leslie, bidding an early good-night to Lily, asked her daughter to accompany her to her room a while, Marian began to tremble and grow pale.

Mrs. Leslie leaned heavily on her daughter's arm, as they went up stairs, and when they had gone into her chamber, carefully shut the door behind them. In about half an hour her bell rang violently, and in an instant after her voice was heard on the landing.

"Bring some ice-water up as quickly as

you can," she said to the servant; "and tell Betty to run up here."

"What is the matter, grandmother?" asked Lily, from the lower hall.

"Your mother has fainted, dear," was the answer.

Lily ran up stairs, with her heart in her mouth, and, going into her grandmother's chamber, saw her mother lying, pallid and senseless, stretched at length upon the floor.

"O mother! mother! What has happened? What was the matter?" she cried, in affright, throwing herself on her knees beside her mother.

"Be quiet, child!" answered her grandmother, who was very pale. "See, she is reviving! Don't disturb her. Let Jane and Betty lift her on to the bed. She was tired with her journey, and ought to have gone to bed before this."

Marian slowly opened her eyes, looked about, then, with a moan, closed them again.

"O mother! what is the matter?" cried Lily.

"You should not disturb nor distress her," said Mrs. Leslie, sharply. "Let her recover. There is nothing the matter. She will be quite well in the morning."

"Yes, I shall be well in the morning, Lily," her mother said, faintly, opening her eyes again. "You better go to bed now; and don't be anxious about me."

"But won't you sleep with me, mother?" asked the girl, piteously.

"No, dear; I will stay with your grandmother to-night."

"There, child, don't make her talk any more," said Mrs. Leslie, impatiently.

Lily bent to kiss her mother, trying hard to keep back the tears of mingled homesickness and alarm, and went away lingeringly, to dream of one far away. The servants were dismissed, the door closed again, and the mother laid down beside her daughter, and drew the beautiful head into her arms.

There was but little sleep for either of them that night, but towards morning Mrs. Philips fell into a troubled sleep. Her mother rose and watched her, saw the long sighs that heaved her breast with every other breath, saw the contractions of the brow, and the moving of the eyes under the closed lids.

"Ah, my God!" she muttered. "And

she doesn't know the worst yet! I was mad! I was mad!"

"O me! O me!" moaned Marian in her sleep; then started, wide awake, and saw her mother leaning over her. "Mother, I have had such a dream!" she exclaimed, then stopped.

For an instant their eyes met; then she sank down again, and buried her face in the pillow. Lily, going to the door as soon as it was opened, was met by her grandmother, who gently put her back.

"Your mother is sleeping," she whispered, "and I don't want her to be waked. We will take breakfast without her. She will feel better for a little more sleep."

It was nearly noon when Mrs. Phillips came down, and Lily uttered an exclamation at sight of her. She was perfectly white, not a tinge of that rich color which seldom deserted her, and in contrast with this pallor, her eyes and hair showed doubly dark. There was something set and cold, too, in her face, as though an icy hand had touched it, congealing its life and expression, as well as its bloom.

"Why, mamma! how dreadfully you do look!" cried Lily, in affright. "I thought that you were better."

"So I am," her mother replied, glancing at her, then, looking away again immediately, seeming to shiver in doing so. "I did not sleep well during the first part of the night, and sleeping late always makes me pale."

"But, mamma," said Lily, choking with tears, "you look as white as marble. I mean to write to papa to come right down here."

"By no means!" her mother exclaimed, coloring violently. "I do not wish you to interfere."

The girl stood astonished.

"You should not fret your mother so," Mrs. Leslie said, more calmly, but still with some severity. "She has had an attack, and will now get well, if you allow her to keep quiet. You will only alarm your father unnecessarily by writing to him. Your mother will herself write, when it is time. Now, child, try not to be frightened at nothing."

Lily held her tongue, and tried to content herself; but everything seemed so gloomy. It was days before her mother appeared like herself again, and even then the girl felt a

difference. Glad enough was she, when, just at sunset one evening, she looked out, at the click of the gate-latch, and saw her father coming up the walk.

"O papa!" she cried, joyfully, and ran to meet him.

He had come without warning, having found the last week too lonely to risk another. Looking up from his daughter's embrace, he saw his wife standing under the shadowy vines of the doorway, their crimson leafage throwing over her a glow which she sorely needed. Even in that glow, he noticed her paleness, and searched her face with startled eyes.

"Marian, you are ill!" he said.

"I have been, but I am well now," she falteringly replied, hiding her face on his shoulder.

"Ill, and not let me know!" he said, reproachfully.

"Mamma fainted the first night we got here!" exclaimed Lily, glad of an opportunity to break through the restraint that had bound her for the last week.

"Why, Marian, what does this mean?" asked her husband, almost severely. "Why was I not informed?"

"Lily makes quite too much of it," said Mrs. Phillips, giving her daughter an almost angry glance. "I suppose that I was tired and anxious, and I fainted. You wouldn't have me send for you two hundred and fifty miles, would you, just for that? I have not been well since. I am bilious, I think. But there was nothing to send for you for. I knew that you would come, and didn't wish to alarm you. Of course, if I had been really ill, I should have sent for you."

"Do you think I have taken poor care of your wife, Mr. Phillips?" asked a voice behind them, and there stood Mrs. Leslie.

Even Marian was startled at her mother's paleness, though Mrs. Leslie smiled, and gave her son-in-law a cordial greeting. Looking at her, he thought that he understood the reason of his wife's changed looks, and that her anxiety for her mother had not been without cause. But Mrs. Leslie's manner contradicted her looks. She was cheerful even to gayety, and Lily caught herself staring, more than once, and wondering why she had never found her grandmother so talkative and agreeable before.

"I only snatched a little time to run down," Mr. Phillips said, as they sat over their tea. "I must go back in the morning. I don't want to be selfish—but," he hesitated, then laughingly added, "I am selfish, whether I wish to do so or not. Now, what I advise is this—that you all three go back with me. You would be better for a change, mother, and it is so long since you visited us that I really think you ought to go."

"I have been promising Marian that I would go up this winter," Mrs. Leslie said. "But it will not be convenient for me to go now. I won't be so selfish, though, as to keep the others away from you. Must you really go in the morning?"

"I really must. I am sorry that you cannot."

"Then Lily and I will," Mrs. Phillips said.

Lily smiled and blushed with delight. She was heartily sick of the gloomy place. The evening was mild, and, as they stepped from the dining-room into the parlor, they saw the open windows full of the white moonlight, in which the crimson woodbines swung and glimmered.

"Is not this beautiful?" cried Lily, who was disposed to be delighted with everything. "Let us sit for a while without lights."

Humoring her, and themselves, also, they sat in that white mystical light, which seemed to change them all to ghosts, so silent were they, so pale they looked in such pallid radiance. The vines swung with a fitful sighing noise, the river flowed with a silver rustle, and there came faint and mournful wafts of melody from a flute-player far away.

"Sing, mamma," said Lily.

She looked up at her husband, on whose arm she rested.

"If anything could be better than this silence, it would be your singing," he whispered; and she caught the radiance of a sweet and tender smile.

Pressing his hand gently, she withdrew and went to sit in the window, where the light wrapped her like a silvery mantle. A moment's silence. Then she sang that most pathetic of prayers—that prayer, the power of which had unnerved the assassin's arm, and melted his heart—that prayer which, while pleading that the singer's

soul might be saved, had saved his life, also.

*"Pieta signore! Di me dolente!"*

Ah, that voice! The husband's heart was stung with love and pain while listening. It was too real. She sang like one weighed down with grief too heavy to bear, crying out for pity lest she should die beneath her burden. He drew a long breath as the rich voice trembled away into silence.

"O mamma!" cried Lily. "That is beautiful, but too mournful. Sing something different to wipe that out."

The singer thought a moment, then sang in a willing, luring voice:

"The water rushed, the water swelled;

A fisherman sat by,  
And gazed upon his dancing float  
With tranquil-dreaming eye.  
And as he sits, and as he looks,  
The gurgling waves arise:  
A maid, all bright with water-drops,  
Stands straight before his eyes.

"She sang to him, she spoke to him!

"My fish why dost thou snare  
With human wit and human guile  
Into the killing air?  
Couldst see how happy fishes live  
Under the stream so clear,  
Thyself would plunge into the stream,  
And live forever there.

" "Bathe not the lovely sun and moon

Within the cool deep sea,  
And with wave-breathing faces rise  
In two-fold witchery?  
Lure not the misty heaven-deeps,  
So beautiful and blue?  
Lures not thine image mirrored in  
The fresh eternal dew?"

"The waters rushed, the waters swelled,

It clasped his feet, I wis:  
A thrill went through his yearning heart,  
As when two lovers kiss!  
She spake to him, she sang to him!  
Resistless was her strain;  
Half-drew him in, half-lured him in;  
He ne'er was seen again."

## CHAPTER IX.

"I had dipped in life's struggle, and not again  
Bore specks of it here, there, easy to see,  
When I found my swan and the cure was plain;  
The dull turned bright as I caught your white  
On my bosom; you saved me—saved in vain  
If you ruined yourself, and all through me!"

THEY started the next morning for home. Mrs. Leslie was looking better, and cheerfully promised to visit them soon, and her cheerfulness seemed to encourage her daughter. Lily was triumphant, and could scarcely restrain her delight at going.

"I am sorry, dear, that you are so glad to get away," her grandmother said, smiling, but reproachful.

"O grandmother, I am not!" Lily exclaimed, blushing at the fib, and at her own want of courtesy. "But I am glad to see papa, and glad that mamma is better. I really wish that you were going with us."

"I will come, presently," was the answer. "Good-by, dear!"

Mrs. Leslie kissed the girl with as much compunction as tenderness, wondering if Lily would take as tender leave of her as she did, if she knew that this bubble of joy which now sparkled in her eyes was to be broken by the hand she was clasping. Wondering, too, how they all would look on her, if they knew of another and yet deeper wrong.

Marian Phillips thought that her heart was heavy when they drove away from the gate, but the heart she left behind was far heavier.

"I would hardly dare tell you how lonely I have been during your absence," Mr. Phillips said. "I think the evenings were about twenty-four hours long. As in the days of the creation, 'the evening and the morning' made my first day, and a long day it was. Nor was I the only disconsolate one. Frank Hazeltine seemed to sympathize with me, heartily."

A faint blush and smile dawned on Lily's cheek. Glancing with a smile toward his wife, Mr. Phillips saw her whole face bathed in red. She turned quickly away, and looked from the carriage window; but it was long before the color died, and when it did, she seemed unable to look at her husband. After the first pause of surprise, the circumstance faded from his mind; but it came back again, afterwards, with a deep and terrible significance.

Mr. Phillips had not thought his wife so

delicate in health, but it seemed that her journey had really injured her. She was quite worn out, and denied herself to visitors for a week, spending the evenings in her own room. Her husband would have remained with her, but, since Lily would go down to the parlor alone, her mother preferred that he should be with her.

"Lily is not old enough to receive visitors alone," she said. "Girls are imprudent, and I don't wish her to have gentlemen calling on her till she is older."

"But, my dear, there is no one down stairs but Frank," her husband said.

Mrs. Phillips was sitting before the fire, and she bent to throw into it some bits of paper she held in her hand, and threw in her handkerchief, too.

"Mr. Frank Hazeltine is a young gentleman, if he is an old acquaintance," she said, almost sharply. "Lily is getting foolish notions into her head. I wish to put a stop to them."

"I suppose you are right," he said. "Lily is too young for such entanglements. Still, if they should fancy each other, I should not think it the worst thing that could happen. However, if you wish, I will go down and play propriety. I hate to leave you alone, though," stooping to kiss her.

"Never mind that," she replied, nervously, almost shrinking from him.

Every evening it was the same. Not a night did Mr. Hazeltine miss, finding always some excuse for a few minutes' stay, at least.

After a week of that, Mrs. Phillips made a resolution. She sent a message through Lily, that she wanted a pattern that Mrs. Hazeltine had, well knowing that Frank would bring it up the next morning. With the same thought, Lily gave the message. Neither of them was mistaken. Scarcely had Mr. Phillips gone out in the morning, when the doorbell rang, and the servant came up to say that Mr. Frank Hazeltine was down stairs.

Mrs. Phillips had called Lily to her chamber as soon as breakfast, and kept her busy there, and the girl had been fretting secretly, and listening to every sound. Now, with a conscious blush, she continued her work, waiting for her mother's expected request that she would go down to their visitor. To her surprise, after the "very well," which dismissed the servant, her mother rose and prepared to go down herself.

"I suppose he has brought the pattern, mamma," Lily said. "Shall I go down and get it?"

"No, you need not leave your work," her mother replied. "I will go."

Lily looked up in surprise and disappointment, but she did not see her mother's face. She only saw the graceful form passing, with stately step, through the door; and again the keenly painful thought darted through her heart, "why need she be so beautiful?"

Marian Philips was, indeed, beautiful that morning. Frank Hazeltine, knowing of her illness, was prepared to see her pale and languid, but he started at the vision that stood in the doorway. She stood there crimson-cheeked and crimson-lipped, with eager glowing eyes fixed on his face. The unrelieved black of her dress, and the dark masses of her hair, threw out this brilliant face, as a cloud throws out its rainbow. As she stood there on the threshold, wavering like some gorgeous flower moved by the wind, he could only gaze in speechless admiration.

She caught her breath, and her composure with it, made him a slight salutation, entered the room, and carefully closed the door after her.

"I brought the pattern you wanted," he said, in some embarrassment, all his commonplace intentions quite blown away by the splendor of her beauty, and the strangeness of her manner.

She took it with a hand that trembled, and, without looking at him, or being able to speak, motioned him to a chair, and took another near him.

"I came down, because I have something to say to you," she said, in a voice that showed her heart was beating violently, then she stopped, as though unable to go on.

"I am very happy to hear anything you wish to say," he replied, wondering what subject could so move Mrs. Philips from her stately calm.

"I wish that you would have confidence in me, and freely tell me whatever I wish to know of your affairs and feelings," she said, with a sudden change of manner, the momentary embarrassment lost in a pathetic, almost passionate earnestness. "I have good reasons for what I ask, and some day I may tell you—some day I must tell you!" she said, clasping her hands. "Now I can only ask you to trust me."

"Ask anything! Ask anything!" he said, his cheeks glowing half with pleasure, half with pain, at sight of her tenderness and her distress.

"I have heard some gossip of you and Alice Allyn," she said, blushing crimson. "Will you tell me if there is any truth in it?"

"I have no serious intentions regarding her," he said, frankly. "I admire her, but there is nothing between us, I assure you."

She looked up at him, now, with a sharp glance. "And Lily—" she said, "people will talk, you know. It cannot be that you have ever thought of Lily!"

He reddened deeply. Could it be that she considered her daughter too good for him, and was this what she was aiming at?"

"I might make the same reply regarding Lily," he replied, a little coldly. "I am not thinking of marriage, yet, and if I were, cannot flatter myself that either of the young ladies you have mentioned would favor me. I should never seek a young lady's hand, without the knowledge and consent of her parents, Mrs. Philips. I am not one to force myself into any family."

She did not seem to perceive how his pride was wounded, but listened only to the first part of his reply.

"Never think of Lily!" she said, hurriedly, her face growing pale. "That is out of the question. I would like you to marry Alice, I think. She is a good girl, and the family is good. They would be a benefit to you in your profession. Alice is a girl who has maintained her dignity and delicacy. You may trust her. Yes, I would like you to marry her."

He looked at her in astonishment, as she repeated the last words in earnest tones.

"You flatter me," he said. "But, since you so decidedly forbid my presuming to think of allying myself with your family, I am at a loss to understand why you should interest yourself in whom I may marry. Still less, why you should voluntarily consent to my seeking the hand of a near relative of yours, and one who may hold herself as far above me, as Miss Lily Philips would."

"I forbid you to think of Lily!" she said, with haughty passion. "I require of you a promise that you will avoid her in future, and never give her the least reason to suppose that you care for her."

His eyes met hers with as haughty a flash.

"I told you to ask anything," he said; "but I was not prepared for such a tone as this. I fail to perceive from whence you derive the authority you seek to exercise over me."

"Do you dispute it?" she said, softly. "I speak imperatively, because I am in earnest. Do you refuse me the assurance I desire?"

"You did not *desire*," he said, "you *demand*. And I am not prepared to say more than I have said."

She turned away and slowly wrung her hands.

"You cannot wonder," he went on, "that I do not find it agreeable to know so unmistakably, that you would consider a connection with me to be a disgrace. No one can feel more severely than myself the sting of my unknown parentage; but that is known to few, every one supposing me really a Hazeltine, and those kind friends of mine apparently forgetting that I am not their flesh and blood. It is a misfortune, I know; but I do not feel it to be a disgrace. I think that only a man's own act can disgrace him; and, Mrs. Phillips, though I can claim neither father nor mother, I do not blush before you."

He had risen while speaking, and stood erect before her, his face pale, but his eyes bright and unflinching.

She listened, eagerly, seeming to take pride in his self-assertion, and smiled a faint sweet smile, as she answered:

"You are right, Frank! But do not fancy that I deserve such a reproof. I was so far from having the motive you suppose, that I never dreamed of its entering your mind to suspect me so. You are very far from the track, and I cannot set you right. But I can tell you that you are wrong, and ask you to trust me."

He seated himself again, more puzzled than ever.

"Did you ever wish that you could know your real parents?" she asked, faintly, half looking away from him.

"Can you doubt it?" he exclaimed. "And yet, they might be such as would do me little credit. On the whole, it is better that I should not. They deserted me when I was a helpless infant, and have no longer any claim on me. They severed the sacred ties of nature, and they can never again reunite them."

"Do not condemn before you know!"

she said, hastily. "A mother is a mother whatever betide, and you cannot throw off her claim. You do not know why she gave you up, or, indeed, if she did so knowingly. At all events, it would seem from the hands in which you were placed, that there was care for your future welfare. Do not condemn your unknown mother, Frank. You do not know what misery she may have suffered."

He looked at her steadily, and her eyes fell. He bent to take the fair hand that trembled on her lap.

"Mrs. Phillips—" he began.

But she interrupted him with feverish haste.

"You will then make the promise I required?"

"Not without an explanation of the reason why you require it," he said, dropping her hand.

"I cannot explain now," she began, but started, and changed countenance, moving quickly away from him.

The next moment the door of the room opened, and Mr. Phillips looked in. He colored faintly on seeing them, but smiled.

"I forgot to say, Marian, that Senor de Cosa is coming to dine with us to-day. I remembered it, just as I reached the car, and came back to tell you. Is there anything in the way?"

"Nothing at all," she replied, looking very pale, and seeming entirely disconcerted by her husband's unexpected return.

"I forgot my umbrella, and it's going to rain," he added, stepping back into the hall.

"Go out with him," she whispered, hurriedly, to the young man. "And don't come very soon again."

Frank Hazeltine looked at her in surprise, almost in displeasure. She was trembling like an aspen, and yet making an effort to control herself. He bowed stiffly, and went out.

Why should she feel confused when her husband found them together? Why should she have a confidence with him which her husband could not share? His cheeks burned, as he walked by Mr. Phillips's side, trying to answer his remarks, sensibly, and trying, also, to put down a thought that rose in his mind. Was Mrs. Phillips coquetish? He blushed still more deeply with shame, at his own unworthy thought, but, yet, found no other explanation of her manner.

If Mr. Phillips was annoyed or suspicious, he could not tell, for that gentleman was too proud, and too perfectly self-possessed to show such feelings, if he had them. But Frank thought that his manner was a little more stately than usual, and when they parted there was merely a good-morning, but no invitation to visit them again.

If Frank Hazeltine could have seen under that calm and proud exterior, he would have shrunk from the fierce conflict that was going on so silently. To Mr. Phillips's mind it was clear that something was going on which his wife did not confide to him, and that something was connected with Mr. Frank Hazeltine. There was no doubt that Lily was pleased with the young man, and that her mother, though, at first she had encouraged the feeling, was now bitterly opposed to it. All this he would not have minded if she had given him any reason for her change of feeling, or if she had not shown such an unaccountable confusion whenever the young man was mentioned, or when he, her husband, had found them talking together. Then, of what could they have been speaking? Marian was evidently agitated. Besides, Mr. Phillips's quick ears had caught that hurried whisper of hers, bidding Frank go out with him, and not come again soon.

All day these thoughts tormented him, and, when evening came, he was thankful to have company to go home with him. He dreaded meeting his wife. Could she deceive him? His heart sunk as he opened the door and stepped into the house where peace no longer dwelt. Ah, folly! He laughed at his fears the next instant; for there she stood, radiantly beautiful, smiling him welcome, a greeting for his companion, and a shy sweet pressure of the hand for himself. His heart threw off its load with a bound, and he would have hated himself that he could suspect her, but that he was so happy to be relieved from suspicion.

Mrs. Phillips was again her own brilliant self that evening. Several friends dropped in, and, inspired by her, the company became a merry one. And, yet, what grace and delicacy in her gayety! No one could for an instant presume on it.

"Ah no, *Senor de Cosa*," she said, laughingly, when that gentleman begged her to give up her seat at the piano, and join in the carpet-dance for which she was playing. "A woman with a grown-up daughter should

be content to look on, or to play for dancing. Lily will dance with you."

Lily took the Spaniard's arm rather unwillingly. She had been listening to every ring of the bell, and watching every arrival that night, and now it was too late for him to come. Why had not her mother invited him? He would surely have come if she had.

"I spoke to Frank Hazeltine, to-day about his matrimonial intentions," Mrs. Phillips said to her husband, when they were alone. "He was a little vexed at first, but spoke quite frankly. He has no thought of marrying at present. I told him that people were already making gossip about him and Lily, and that I did not wish her name to be so used. I added that it would be better he should not come quite so much. I only hope that he has not perceived Lily's foolish predilection."

"I think it is merely a fleeting fancy of Lily's," her father said, his last doubt taking wing.

"Doubtless," was the reply. "But I think that it would be well if we should go away for a while. What do you say to a few months in Washington?"

## CHAPTER X.

"She, ruined? How? No heaven for her? Crowns to give, and none for the brow That looked like marble and smelt like myrrh? Shall the robe be worn, and the palm branch borne,  
And she so graceless, she graced now  
Beyond all saints, as themselves ever?"

In three weeks everything was ready for the start to Washington. And in all that three weeks Frank Hazeltine had not been near the house. The last day came, and Lily had gone to spend it at her Aunt Allyn's. They were to start from there the next morning, their servants having been dismissed, and their house put in order to close. Mrs. Phillips would remain in the house to put some last things into the trunks, before the expressman should call for them.

About noon Mr. Phillips came slowly up the street, towards his home. He was heavy of heart, for he had bad news to tell. A telegram had just been given him for his wife. Mrs. Leslie had been suddenly attacked with paralysis, and her daughter was urged to come to her immediately. He



hardly knew how to communicate the news to his wife. She was always so sensitive to any illness of her mother's; and this blow would be doubly severe, from coming when they were looking forward to gayety, only.

He went into the house with his latchkey, but found no one there. Recollecting that Marian had mentioned having to go out for some trifling purchase, he sat down to await her return. He sat by a window in the front parlor, and partly opening one of the closed shutters, looked down the street watching for her. In a few minutes he saw her coming, accompanied by Frank Hazeltine. The husband watched her graceful form with a lover's pride and fondness, sighing to think that the news he had for her would soon quench that rosy flame in her cheeks. He scarcely gave a thought to her escort, supposing that their meeting was a chance one, and that he would leave her at the door.

But Mr. Phillips bit his lip with annoyance to find that the gentleman did not turn from the step, but came in with her. They passed by the door of the front parlor, where he sat, and walked the length of the hall to the last room of the suite. The doors were open through, and he could see them distinctly, himself unseen in the dimness. He would wait till Marian should be alone, he thought. He had no mind to see Mr. Hazeltine, and really could not understand why Marian need have asked him in.

But there was something odd in the manner of the two. Mr. Hazeltine seemed earnestly urging something which she was unwilling to concede. What could it mean? Her eyes were almost wild with a mingled fear and longing, such as her husband had never seen in them before, and she sat slowly wringing her hands in an agony of uncertainty. Frank Hazeltine stood before her, pale and resolute, seeming to command her.

They were too far away for Mr. Phillips to hear a word, and he was too much of a gentleman to go nearer, but he knew by the young man's manner that he had put some final question, and, half-turning to go, would stay no longer unless it were answered. She clasped the slow-wringing hands, and looked up at him, and, as she did so, her face changed in a way that made her husband's heart grow cold. A soft color flushed her brow, the eyes had a look of proud fondness, and the lips parted with a tender smile.

Two or three impetuous words broke from the young man's lips, then she spoke. She seemed to be telling something in a rapid agitated way, as though anxious to get over it, and her eyes were turned away from his while she spoke. Gradually the color died out of her face, and his, as he listened breathlessly, grew pale, also. She paused and looked up to give him a swift and piercing glance. He took one step nearer her and spoke a word. Hiding her face in her hands, she answered it.

The change that passed over the young man's face was startling. Over its pallor swept a deep flush, the eyes sparkled like fire, and the mouth trembled with a glad breath. He flung himself on his knees before her, and, as he threw his arms about her drooping form, the husband heard the words that broke from his lips. "O dearest! dearest!"

Marian Phillips lifted an April face of smiles and tears, and, putting back the hair from his forehead, with her fair fingers, bent to leave a kiss there.

"Dear Frank!" she said, "then you love me? You do not despise me?"

There was a heavy step on the threshold. She lifted her eyes, and Frank Hazeltine started to his feet at the same instant. Mr. Phillips stood there white and stern, and said no word, but pointed the young man to the door.

Frank Hazeltine hesitated.

"Speak!" he said, turning to Marian.

She waved him away. "Go! go!" she whispered.

He paused yet an instant longer, looking from one to the other, then, at another wave of her hand, turned and left the room, and the house.

Marian Phillips leaned back in her chair, faint and powerless, and watched her husband walk with heavy step up and down the room. He never looked at her, but kept his face bowed, and his eyes fixed on the carpet.

"Edward!" she said, when she could bear that silence no longer.

He shivered and turned his head away from her. She started up, and put herself in his path.

"Do not touch me! Do not let me look at you!" he said, in a voice of suppressed passion.

"O my husband!" she cried; "do you fling me away thus?"

**“Your husband?” he echoed. “Do you then recollect that you have a husband?”**

**“I never forgot it!” she said.**

**“But I,” he said, with haughty scorn, “I forget that I have a wife!”**

**She looked up into his face with one glance, and then, as he turned away from her, she sank down like one dead upon the floor.**

**[TO BE CONTINUED.]**

## MARIAN LESLIE'S HUSBAND:

—OR,—

### A WORM IN THE BUD.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

[This Story was commenced in the June Number of the Magazine.]

#### CHAPTER XI.

"I pray you, what is the nest to me,  
My empty nest?  
And what is the shore where I stood to see  
My boat sail down to the west?  
Can I call that home where I anchor yet,  
Though my good man has sailed?  
Can I call that home where my nest was set,  
Now all its hope has failed?"

MARIAN PHILIPS opened her eyes to find herself alone, lying upon the carpet in her luxurious room. Ah, the sickening coming back to consciousness, and the certainty of ruin! She raised herself wearily, and looked about. Already the place looked strange to her. She was an alien. The walls that hid her from the world were the walls of his house, and she must go out from them. The pictures that glowed there were his, and that face among them whose steady earnest gaze had been the look of love, now wore the probing look of suspicion and disgust. She turned her own face away from it, only to encounter the mocking gaze of other and younger eyes. The fair young head, with its coronet of golden hair, and its pale luminous purity, seemed lifted now with an air of cold disdain. Could she bear the scorn of her own daughter? Anger came with the thought, and stung through all her veins, giving her a temporary strength.

"Let me get out of their sight!" she cried out, starting to her feet. "None are so cruel as the coldly good, or the ignorantly innocent."

As she stood up, she saw an envelop on the chair beside her, and seized it eagerly, thinking that her husband had left some written sentence—something which he could not speak, even in anger. She tore it open, and read the telegram from her mother's physician:

"Your mother has had an attack of pa-

ralysis, and can live but a short time. Come quickly."

If she felt grief, she scarcely knew it. She felt like one stunned, yet with sense enough to do all that was needful. Hastily filling a travelling-bag with all necessary articles, she put her rich dresses back into the trunks, leaving the key in the lock. Then she sat down to write a line to her husband. Her husband! He had disowned her, but in her heart she still claimed him. Her note was a brief one.

"I do not claim any right to dictate your actions," she wrote; "but I can, I suppose, express a wish. I start immediately for my mother's. I wish that you and Lily would go to Washington, as arranged. After that you will do as you please. It seems to me that this is best to avoid talk."

As she sealed the note there came a sharp ring at the doorbell. She started up with an impulse to fly, as though she had been caught in some other person's house, or doing some criminal thing. It could not be Mr. Philips, who had a key. If Lily had come back for anything—well, she might as well see her.

Composing herself as best she might, she opened the door, and saw the postman, who gave her a letter. She did not dare to look at the superscription. This was surely from Mr. Philips.

"Would you do me a favor?" she asked, almost timidly, feeling that he must know her guilt, and already descending from her serene and commanding stateliness.

"I should be very happy!" the man said, bowing lowly.

Who, indeed, would not be happy to do anything for the beautiful Mrs. Philips?

"Will you send a carriage round here from the stable as you pass?" she asked.

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"And tell them to come immediately. I have a telegram which requires me to take the next eastern train."

"I will send the carriage at once," he said, proud of the chance to do a service for her.

Marian put the letter into her bosom, and gathered up the few things she was to take. Then she took out her purse, counted out money enough to pay her way to her mother's, and left the remainder on the little escritoire. That done, she walked up and down, waiting impatiently for the carriage.

She had intended to read her letter after leaving the house, that if it should contain her dismissal, she could say that she went voluntarily; but she could not wait. Anything was better than suspense. She tore open the cover, and opened out the sheet with shaking hands. It was not her husband's handwriting, but a woman's slight and characterless chirography. She looked at the bottom of the page, and read, "Caroline Wisnor."

For fourteen years she had not heard from this woman, and she had not seen her since the day of Clark Wisnor's tragical death. What more evil was to come? For nothing but evil could come from such a source.

"It never rains but it pours," said Marian Philips, with a bitter smile, and read.

But it was not the rain that now descended on her head. It was the bolt, that blighted her last hope, if hope she had.

"Mr. Henry White was a justice on that 20th of November," the note ran. "Therefore the marriage was legal, and the marriage contracted after that is null. I have taken pains to inform myself, and find that I have been the victim of a conspiracy."

Marian put her hand to her forehead, and tried to think. She felt numb and cold.

"If this is true, then I am the greater victim," she muttered. "But it can't be true. I had always such an imagination! I am dreaming, evidently; but I feel as though I were dying. I wish that Edward would come home."

She was recalled presently by the continued ringing of the doorbell. The carriage had come for her. It was true, then, that her mother was ill, and that she must go to

her. She read the telegram again, then went out to the carriage.

"Do you want the house door shut?" asked the driver, pointing to the door that she had left wide open.

"If you please," she answered, quietly, wondering all the time if she were dreaming, and if she would find her husband anywhere.

She had dim visions of cars flying through a country all red and gold with October, of a man asking for her ticket, which she couldn't find, of stopping, towards sunset, and seeing some one come into the car to look for her. Doctor Francis, her mother's physician, took her by the hand and led her out. She stepped into the carriage that awaited them, without asking any question, and he volunteered no communication. In a few minutes they reached the well-known gate. It stood open, and the front door was silently opened as they approached it.

They went in, and an old servant came and took Mrs. Philip's things, smoothed her hair with tender tremulous hands, and then brought her a glass of wine. She drank it mechanically, then rose to go up stairs. The woman up there had wronged her fearfully, but she was her mother, and she was dying.

But what was any wrong or any earthly pain in such a presence? What wave of bitter feeling dared rise to beat against that cold and silent face? What word of reproach or of forgiveness could vex or soothe that pulseless heart? Mrs. Leslie was dead!

"O mother!" cried Marian Leslie, all her calm breaking up in a passion of grief.

"She seemed very anxious to see you," the doctor said, after a time. "I think she had something of importance to communicate, probably about the property. She tried to write, or to make signs; but we could not understand, and her hands were paralyzed. She managed to point to the letters of the alphabet, and to spell out a few words, but did not live to finish. Here is what she wrote."

He gave Marian a sheet of paper on which he had written the letters as the invalid had indicated them.

"Searched the records. Last is good. Am justified. Do not fear—"

There the pointing hand had failed, and what more the dying woman would have said must remain forever unknown.

The daughter put the paper carefully into her pocket-book, scarcely able to understand what it meant, scarcely caring what it meant. "Do not fear!" What, indeed, had she to fear, now? Everything that could happen had already happened.

"Would you like me to send any despatches for you?" the doctor said, as he prepared to go away.

"No," she replied, quietly.

"Mr. White will undertake anything that may need to be done," he said. "I thought that you would rather have him. Mrs. Francis will come up this evening, if you would like to have her."

"Thank you, doctor, not to-night. If she will come up in the morning, I shall be thankful; and, doctor, I would like everything to be very quiet. Let the funeral be here at the house, and no one come but my mother's intimate friends. You know who they were. Good-night!"

He would have lingered and asked some questions—if her husband and daughter were coming, or any of Mrs. Leslie's relatives. But her manner silenced him, seeming to say, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no further."

"Of course they have arranged all that," he thought, as he went away.

The next morning Mrs. Francis went up to see Marian, and to undertake those services which a woman can best render at such a time.

"I suppose you will expect your husband and daughter this evening?" she said. "The doctor will go to the depot for them."

"They have gone to Washington," said Mrs. Phillips, briefly.

"Indeed! Then Mrs. Allyn—does she know?"

"Mrs. Allyn is laid up with a sprained ankle," Marian said. "There are none but young people who could come, and I don't want them. They would have but little feeling in the matter, and would be no comfort to me. I shall send for no one."

"You poor dear!" exclaimed the kind old lady. "You are left quite alone. It is too bad!"

"Yes, I am left quite alone," said Marian, lifting a tearless desolate face to the other's pitying gaze.

"Hush, nightingale, hush! O sweet nightingale, wait,

Till I listen and hear  
If a step draweth near,  
For my love he is late!"

"Now, mamma, I hope that you are comfortable," said Miss Alice Allyn, standing before her mother's sofa, after having smoothed out blankets, shawls and pillows.

"Yes, dear, that will do nicely. And the mother sank back with a contented sigh. "You are a very good nurse, Alice."

"Thank you, mamma! I am glad that you begin to appreciate me," laughed the girl.

"Appreciate!" echoed her brother Fred, who sat near. "You're made a goose of, Lisa. You're appreciated to death!"

The truth was, that Mr. and Mrs. Allyn thought their daughter superior to anything, and had a way of lauding her which her own good sense scarcely approved of, though her affection made her lenient, even when she found herself somewhat mortified by their over-praise.

"Now, it was your fault that mother sprained her ankle," pursued the young man. "If you hadn't been on the step—"

"I am quite thankful for that sprain," Mrs. Allyn interrupted, showing a note. "If I were able, I should have to go to Mrs. James's to dinner, and meet those Lincolns, whom I do not wish to know. She is determined to force them on people, and now I can avoid it. I shall be obliged to decline, 'with regrets,' and of course no one can expect me to receive company when I can't step on my foot."

"They have taken up that Mrs. Wisnor, too," said Lily, who sat near the window, looking into the street.

"Yes," her aunt said. "Cousin Marian is fortunate in getting away from the city just now. These vulgar people are very pushing, and never take a hint; though, indeed, not one of our connections would ever notice Mrs. Wisnor. But the Jameses take up any one who has money."

"I wonder mamma does not come," Lily said, looking up the street.

Her cousin Fred came and stood behind her chair; but instead of looking into the street, he was looking down on her golden coronet of hair, her fair brow, and the delicate hands folded on her lap.

"Now, Alice, give me that magazine, and then run up and change your dress," her mother said. "It is nearly dinner-time, and they will be in soon."

They were in the dining-room, which Mrs. Allyn made her reception-room during her illness. She had no notion of being hidden away up stairs for nobody knows how long, and seeing the family only by fits and starts. She stayed in the midst of them, had her meals sent from the table where they ate, and placed on the little stand at her elbow, where she ate, and joined in their conversation. Then, at night, she had a sofa-bed made up in the little library near.

While she lay engrossed in the last novel, the two young people at the window were carrying on a little by-play. Fred Allyn had fastened something sparkling to the curtain cord, and let it down into Lily's lap, as he stood over her.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I'm fishing with a golden hook," he said. "I want to catch something."

She took the end of the cord, and saw a tiny ring, in which was set a clear ruby, the true pigeon-blood tint.

"Beautiful!" said Lily, holding it in the light. "Whose is it, Cousin Fred?"

"Try it on," he said. "Like Cinderella's slipper, it belongs to whom it fits."

"I'll make it fit me, if I have to wear it on my thumb," Lily said, trying. "I've got so many fingers, it seems that it might. See! it just fits the third."

"Then let it stay there," her cousin said, softly.

"Dear Fred!" she said, facing about, "do you mean it for me, really?"

"Yes, if you like it," he said, assuming an indifferent air, and pretending to look out of the window.

"I thank you very much!" she said, fervently. For Lily was very fond of jewels. "You are so good! I will wear it always, for your sake."

"And always on that finger?" he inquired, significantly.

"Yes," said Lily, unconsciously, forgetting that it was the marriage finger. And how should she suspect that her Cousin Fred was crazy about her, and that Mrs. Allyn of all things desired the match, and that, on that account, they were quite willing to keep Mr. Frank Hazeltine at a distance?

"Has aunt seen it?" asked Lily.

"No," the young man said, blushing a little. "Go and show it to her, if you wish to."

Mrs. Allyn admired the ring, squeezed the little hand that wore it, and glanced smilingly towards her son.

One might easily pardon her if the glance was one of pride, for the young man was one of whom no mother need to be ashamed. A delicate patrician face, fair, like his sister's, but more intellectual than any in the family, a willowy grace of figure, and a sweet low voice. Were Frank Hazeltine once out of the way, it was not likely that this one need despair.

Time wore away. Mr. Allyn came home to dinner, but no sign of either Mr. or Mrs. Philips.

"I can't think what has become of them, unless they went to Mrs. Hazeltine's," Mrs. Allyn said. "Marian may have called there, and been persuaded to stop."

"But she promised to come up here early to dinner," Lily said, pettishly, and coloring as she went to the window again. "Besides, papa isn't likely to have gone there. I have a mind to run down to the house and see if they are there."

"I came that way," Mr. Allyn said, "and it is all closed up. They must have thought of some last thing to do. We will wait a little longer."

They waited till the dinner was in danger of spoiling, then sat down to the table, wondering, but not anxious—perhaps a little annoyed, at the broken promise. But when dinner was over, a note was brought in to Mrs. Allyn. She read it with an exclamation of dismay.

"Why, this accounts!" she cried. "Mr. Philips and Marian are both hundreds of miles away. The strangest thing! Mrs. Leslie is very ill, and Marian has gone down there, without having time to come up here, and Mr. Philips has had a sudden business call out west. Well, if this isn't a scattering! And your trip to Washington is, of course; at an end, my dear. Your father seems in great haste. He sends his love to you, says that your grandmother had paralysis, and that your mother could not delay. Poor Marian! how distressing for her! Well, to be sure, read for yourself, child."

Lily read the note, half-distressed, half-delighted. She was sorry to have her grandmother suffer, and her parents away; but then, she need not leave the city.

"I must write to mamma in the morning," Lily said, "and see if she wants me to come."

Mrs. Philips received the letter on the day of her mother's funeral.

"I will come if you wish me to, mamma," Lily wrote. "I am so much afraid you may get ill, as you did before. You don't know how lonesome it is, with you and papa both away. Do write us what was that sudden business that took him out west. He wrote in such haste, that he gave no particulars. The note was all blotted."

Marian moaned to herself, reading that letter.

"It will be long before you have your father and mother both with you again," she thought. "Poor child! But what does she know about being lonesome? He has said nothing to them, then. He must expect that I will write."

So the next day, she wrote her daughter a letter so tender, so almost passionate, that poor Lily wept herself sick over it. But her mother requested her to remain where she was. She herself must remain yet some time, to settle up her mother's affairs. She was now the only one left, and must see to everything. Besides, she felt like being alone and undisturbed. But she wished her daughter to write often to her sorrowful mother.

"Poor mamma!" sobbed Lily; "she will make herself ill. I have a mind to go, in spite of her."

"No, child, stay as she requests," Mrs. Allyn said. "You could do no good, and would only make yourself gloomy."

"But how odd she never once mentions papa!" said Lily.

"She must be very busy," her aunt said, "and probably forgot it. She will write again; and of course your father will write in a day or two."

But it was nearly a week before any word came from Mr. Philips, and then it was scarcely a pleasant letter. He must remain where he was yet some time longer. He was quite well, and wished Lily to write him. Not a word did he say of her mother or of her grandmother.

But Lily had another subject to occupy her thoughts, and trouble her heart. After her parents had been gone several days, she ventured to call at Mrs. Hazeltine's and seek for condolence.

"I feel quite deserted," said the girl, almost crying.

"But you are with friends, child," Mrs. Hazeltine said, kindly. "You should be thankful that you have so many friends. Now there are only Mr. Hazeltine, myself and Frank, in our family, and no other relative nearer than a tenth cousin, that I know of. I am sorry that your mother had to be there alone. It must have been hard for her. But, of course, at your grandmother's age, she could not be expected to live a great many years, particularly as she has been very delicate. Frank writes me that the neighbors say she has been ill a long time, but would not own it."

"Frank there!" said Lily, in a faint voice.

"Yes, dear. Frank went down the day after the funeral. He collects his father's rents there. I expect him home this afternoon. Indeed," looking at the clock, "it is time he were here now."

Lily sat pale and silent. Frank there! But she hated herself for caring. Should she linger now, and perhaps see him?

"Stay and dine with me," Mrs. Hazeltine urged. "If Frank comes, he can perhaps tell you particulars that your mother didn't write. It is always more satisfying to hear than to read. And if he doesn't come, I shall be lonely, and want your company."

"Did Frank see mamma?" Lily asked, falteringly, suffering Mrs. Hazeltine to take off her bonnet.

"I think not," was the answer. "He wrote that she saw no one but the lawyer and the doctor. You know Doctor Francis's family were very old friends of your mother."

Lily scarcely knew what they were talking of, she was listening so intently for every step. And by-and-by it came; up the step, and then the key in the latch. Mrs. Hazeltine's ears were no less attentive, and at the first sound she rose to meet and welcome her son. Lily heard their voices in the entry, then Mrs. Hazeltine came in alone.

"Frank will be down in a few minutes," she said. "I told him that you were here."

It was a long few minutes before the young man appeared, and when he did, Lily immediately observed a change in his looks. He was pale, and his manner was embarrassed. His first eager glance toward her

was the last direct look he gave her. He seemed oppressed with some consciousness which made it impossible for him to meet her eye. His father came in, and Frank occupied himself in telling him about business, and never addressed Lily till they rose from the dinner-table. Then, Mr. and Mrs. Hazeltine speaking together for a moment, Lily ventured to ask him if he had seen her mother.

"Yes, once," he said, looking away from her. "She does not see visitors. She wishes to hear from you; I think that she will feel better if you write often. When do you expect your father back?"

"I do not know," she replied, coldly. "Did mamma say when she would come back?"

"No. I supposed she would write you herself."

"That is not sure," the girl said, tremulously. "Everybody seems to know more about them than I do."

He bent to pat on the head a cat that came purring about him, and made no reply.

"Well, has Frank told you all about your mother?" asked Mrs. Hazeltine, brightly, joining them.

"O yes," said Lily, with lively bitterness. He has told me everything! I am quite satisfied; and now I must go home."

And home she went, in spite of urging, taking leave of them with an air of gayety in which one, only, saw the sting.

"Good-evening," she said to him, carelessly.

"I will walk round with you," he said.

"O, there is no need," said Lily, coldly. "It is not dark. I am not at all afraid."

"I would rather go," he said, quietly, and with something of coldness, too.

They walked nearly half the way in silence; then Lily began to relent, thinking him angry.

"It is so lonesome without papa and mamma," she said, "that it makes me cross and unhappy."

"I hope that she may soon come back to you," he said, in an earnest voice. "It must be sad for her there. Think of her."

"I do," the girl said, quickly, feeling the reproach. "But why need she stay alone, and forbid me to come?"

"She will be likely to stay till your father goes for her," was the reply. And with that, they were at the steps of Mr. Allyn's house.

"Will not you come in?" she asked, timidly.

"Thank you, no. Mrs. Hazeltine will be expecting me. They have not seen me for a week, and I have to tell them about the rents."

"Wont you come up some time?" she asked, still lingering. "It seems like home to see you."

"Does it?" he asked, quickly, brightening.

"Yes; we have known you so long. Will you come?"

"Perhaps I will, Lily," he said, taking her hand, and pressing it gently. Then with a hasty good-night he turned away, leaving her contented and happy.

Evening after evening she watched then, but no Frank came; still she looked. Surely he had been pleased at her asking him. The looking for him helped to keep her mind from other troubles. Three weeks had passed from the day of the sudden departure of her father and mother, and still no sign of either of them returning.

"I begin to think there is something more in this than we know," Mrs. Allyn said, to her husband. "You may depend on it, Marian and her husband have had some trouble. They do not mention each other in their letters. There is no more need of their staying away than there is of their flying."

"But what trouble could there be?" asked her husband.

"I can't imagine," she replied; "but if neither of them comes in another week, I shall go down to see what Marian is doing."

The two, with Alice, were walking down the street to spend the evening with a friend. Lily had declined going, pleading a headache, and it was her evident indisposition which had caused the conversation. Her aunt had made up her mind that something was the matter, and that Lily suspected it.

Meantime, Lily sat at home alone. She had turned off the gas in the room, and sat before the bright coal fire, waiting. She felt as though Frank would come up that night. He had not yet been near her; but she had seen him at a distance, that day, in the street, and he had seen her. They were too distant to bow, but he might come up. So she sat, and waited, and listened.

The soft light bathed her, and the warmth burned her pale cheeks till they were rosy-red. Step after step rang on the sidewalk,



and made her hold her breath to listen; but they all passed by, and now it was nearly nine o'clock. She sighed to think that she must give him up, and even in sighing she heard a step on the walk, and coming up to the door. At that moment, heavy carriages passing drowned the sound of the bell; but presently there was a voice and a step in the entry, then the door of the room opened and closed after some one.

She sat still, with quickly beating heart, and could not or would not turn till she should be spoken to. There was a step behind her chair, some one leaned over to put a hand on her shoulder, then a lock of soft hair brushed her forehead, and a kiss was lightly pressed to her cheek.

"My darling, what are you dreaming about?" he asked.

"Fred!" she exclaimed, with a pang of bitter disappointment.

"Yes. Were you asleep? Did I wake you?"

"No," she sighed; "I don't sleep so easily. But why did not you go to Mr. Severns?"

"Because you were not there," he said, bending his knee to the floor, and leaning on the arm of her chair. "I take no pleasure in going where you are not, Lily. I don't know what would become of me, if you were ever to banish me from your presence, or if you should give any one else a better right to your society than I have."

There was no mistaking his manner, unused as she was to lovers, and she shrank from him almost in affright.

"O don't, Fred!" she whispered. "I can't allow you to talk so!"

"Then I will not, Lily," he said, quietly. "But I wanted you to know that I love you. The rest I leave with you, only don't forget that I love you, and always shall. And when any one else asks for your love, stop and ask yourself if you can be happier with him than with me. Now don't be afraid of me, Lily. I am your Cousin Fred, again."

"You gave me yourself,  
And bound your soul by the vows that damn;  
Since, on better thought, you break, as you  
ought,

Vows—words no angel set down, some elf,  
Mistook—for an oath, an epigram.

UNDER Mr. Edward Phillips's somewhat superb gentleness there burned a latent fire, before which his wife's impulsive passion might well blanch. However she might sway him in moods of tenderness, once roused, he was her master. Both were aware of this; and while it made Marian wary lest she should break her sceptre by a too great stress in using, with the husband it sweetened a homage which no one could suspect to be other than voluntary. But now there was no longer any talk of homage. The idol had fallen, not only from the niche where it had pleased him to place her, but below any place where he could suffer himself to see her. His happiness, his peace were wrecked. There remained but one thing to save, and that was his pride. Was it possible to save himself and his family from babbling tongues, and yet not lay down his honor at the feet that had already trampled on it? There must be time to think. He did not dare trust himself to any precipitate act.

When she fell at his feet, no emotion of pity softened his heart. "Women always faint on such occasions," he thought; "and they can recover." He was ready to believe her capable of any power of dissimulation.

For a moment he stood wrapped in thought, such thought as starts out, sharp as a blade, with the emergency; then his plan shaped itself swiftly. That fortunate summons to her mother—he cared little at the moment for the grief she might feel—would help to simplify the present arrangement. He would find an excuse to leave the city in some other direction. He could not meet his daughter or his friends. He could not answer questions, or wear a mask. He must have change, motion—anything to relieve the chaos of his mind, and give him time for thought.

Concluding thus, he dropped the telegram on a chair, and without a glance at the prospective form of what had been so dear to him, went out of the room with a firm step.

"Are you ill, sir?" asked a porter to whom he gave some orders.

"Ill!" he repeated, haughtily. "Pray, what should make you ask such a question?"

"I beg your pardon!" said the man, astonished at his master's anger as much as at his strange paleness.

A hasty note was written and mailed to Mrs. Allyn, then he stepped on board a train of cars that was just leaving the city, scarcely conscious where he was going, intent only on getting away. He rode all night, and in the morning found himself in a strange city, with three idle hours on his hands. No train started westward for three hours, and he must wait. He had slept none all night, and for a moment thought that he might forget himself if he should lie down on a sofa in the depot.

He lay down, covered his face and closed his eyes, and immediately all disposition to sleep fled. Soft visions came of sweet home scenes, the fireside, the gentle cares and companionship, the peace and trust which had seemed so assured, and, first showing him their beauty and their sweetness, dissolved mockingly before his eyes, and faded into blackness. He fancied that a soft hand touched his face with caressing fingers, that a faint remembered perfume floated over him, that a slight rustle of a lady's dress disturbed the silence, till, wrung by a sharp pang of hope, he would open his eyes with a flashing glance, to realize the bitter truth.

"I can't bear this!" he muttered, and, starting up, went out to walk away the time.

To see him one would have supposed that he was much interested in the architecture of the town—in its monuments, its squares, its views. He paused mechanically, and looked at all which one really interested would have looked at; but when he reached the depot again, he could not have told one thing he had seen.

Riding again all the afternoon and all night, and again a pause. And so on till he reached the far West, and was in no danger of meeting any one whom he knew. Then he stopped and set himself to work to map out his life. Bitter work it was, and done with many a groan.

After a week came a letter from Lily, and from that he learned that Marian had gone to her mother, and that from her they had learned nothing. She evidently meant to be passive, and leave him to arrange the affair. Perhaps, when she learned from

Lily where he was, she would write to him, and try to soften his anger; try to offer some explanation, or to assure him of her penitence. If he hoped for such a thing, he was disappointed. Not a line came from her, nor a message. And Lily had written him, "I asked mamma about you, and she forgot to tell me. She was so much distressed by poor grandmother's death, that she never once mentioned your name. And she won't let me go to her."

At thought of Marian watching alone over her dead mother, and performing the last offices for her unsupported by any of those who should have been her nearest, the husband felt a pang of pity. But it died as soon as born. One thought of that scene which he had witnessed was like a blight on all gentler feelings.

But he waited still. Perhaps she would write some explanation or prayer when she should have recovered from the first shock of her mother's death, and when she perceived him passive. But week after week passed, and no word came. Something must be done. Lily was beginning to think the continued absence of both her parents very strange, and others would also notice it; and it was clear that Marian would not return home till he summoned her.

His plan was laid. He would go to her, and force himself to look again on that fair false face. He would give her the opportunity of explaining, if it were possible to palliate her fault. If she could not do that—he was sure that she could not—he would place before her their plan of life. If she had regard enough left for her own name, and for her daughter's welfare, to swear never again to hold any communication with Frank Hazeltine—ah, could he believe her oath, even!—then he would consent to live with her again, and to appear before the world as heretofore. But never, he would assure her, need she hope for his love or his confidence again. They would go to Europe for years, for as long as he should choose, and there no one need make any comment if he showed little love for his wife.

On the other hand, if she should hesitate to satisfy him promptly and solemnly of her future conduct, then they must separate at once and forever, at any cost to name. With that determination, he started on his return, the morning after having received a letter from Lily.

"I am quite out of patience!" Lily wrote. "I think that I am used ill. This is the last letter I shall write you, and I have said the same to mamma. I think that, if you will not hurry on my account, you should on hers, for by all accounts she must be ill. Doctor Francis was here this week, and he says that she is killing herself with grief for grandmother. He says that she is pale and weak, and a mere shadow, and that she will see no one. She seems almost angry, he said, when he proposed her returning home; and I could see that he thought strange that no one went to her.

"Do come, papa! It is now nearly five weeks, and I am homesick."

Well, if people were "thinking strange," it was time he should go. So go he did. But he gave no notice of his coming.

It was evening when he reached the city, and he hesitated long whether he should go to Mrs. Allyn's, or postpone seeing them till he should have seen Marian. He walked through the streets, and past his own closed and desolate house. At the sight of that monument of his misery he stopped, and in the agony of the moment, for the first time, a wild thought crossed his mind. Why need he live? A click of the pistol, a stroke of the knife, a step from the plank, or a draught, and all would be over. But the thought was rejected as soon as entertained. Edward Phillips was not a man to commit suicide.

But that sight utterly unfitted him for seeing any one. He could not bear Lily's welcome and her questions. He would wait until he had settled what should be. Drawing the keys from his pocket, he went up the steps of his house and entered. The air was close and chilly, and there seemed something tomblike in the closed shutters and covered furniture. He lighted the gas, and looked about him. There was the chair where she had sat, with that fellow on his knees beside her, embracing her. There was the spot where she lay when he spurned and left her. Something glittered on the carpet as he looked, and stooping, he picked up a long golden-headed pin, such as she used to confine her hair with. What visions of her rich shining locks started up with it! How often he had twisted their loose silky coils about his fingers! How often they had swept across his breast as her beautiful head was bowed to his shoulder! O, could it all be a dream! Was all

her apparent love a lie? He could not believe it, and as he pressed the frail golden token to his lips, in a passionate impulse, his heart cried out for her. Why had he not waited then and listened to what she might say?

It was not long before he noticed her escritoire, and found the note which she had left for him, and saw the money which she had taken from her purse. No excuse, no pleading, only an acceptance of whatever he might decide on. But the money told more than anything else, and moved him more. It seemed to be a throwing off of his help, and was the only mark of indignation which she had shown.

Early the next morning he started, and reached his journey's end in the afternoon. Avoiding the sight of familiar faces, he went hastily away from the station, and walked down an unfrequented street. It was in a different direction from the one to Mrs. Leslie's house, but he wished to collect his thoughts and calm himself before meeting his wife. For at the mere thought of meeting her, his heart rose up with tumultuous beatings. Could he see her, and not take her to his heart again? He was obliged to review her offence in order to harden himself.

Twilight was falling when he laid his hand on the latch of the gate, and went up the well-remembered walk. The house was all closed, save in one room where the shutters were open and the curtains drawn back. The lamps were not yet lighted, but he saw through the windows the red glow of the fire, and the shadow of some one passing before it. He waited a moment on the step, then opened the door and entered. At the sound of his tread the door of the sitting-room opened, and some one stood there, not the form he looked to see, but a stouter and ruder one.

"Who is it?" asked Mrs. Lennon, the housekeeper, whom Marian had retained still.

She had been with Mrs. Leslie since Marian was a very young girl, and was the only person acquainted with all their family affairs. She had married and been widowed since Marian's marriage, and had gladly gone back to her former home, where she was as gladly received.

Mr. Phillips did not answer her question, but walked straight toward her.

"Good heavens! Mr. Phillips!" she ex-

claimed, recoiling, as the light of the fire shone in his face.

"Yes, Mr. Phillips," he repeated, sternly, walking past her.

There was no one else in the room, and he turned to her, waiting to hear her offer to go for his wife. Instead of that, she closed the blinds, lighted the lamps, and then stood before him waiting till he should speak.

"Will you go for Mrs. Phillips?" he demanded.

The woman looked distressed and confused. "Mrs. Phillips is not here, sir," she said.

"Not here!" he exclaimed, angrily, thinking that he had been led to make a fool's journey, and that Marian had boldly gone back to Lily without his permission. "Where is she, then? Has she gone home?"

"This is her home!" the woman replied, coldly. "She has left it, but I do not know where she has gone. She left a letter for you, in case you should write to her here. She did not expect you to come. If you will sit down, sir, I will get it for you."

Involuntarily he seated himself at her bidding, feeling the need of being directed in this new emergency. In a few minutes Mrs. Lennon returned with the letter, which she placed in his hand, and then turned to leave the room.

"If you want me, please to ring the bell," she said.

In a few minutes the bell was rung so violently that the wire broke, and, going to the room, the housekeeper was confronted by Mr. Phillips, who stopped in a rapid walk, and looked at her with eyes that blazed from his pale face.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded, in a choked voice. "Where has Mrs. Phillips gone?"

"I do not know, sir," she replied, firmly. "I only know that she has gone, but she did not tell me where."

"I do not believe you!" he exclaimed, stepping nearer her, in a manner that made her shrink back in fear.

"It is true," she repeated. "And, sir, I am not responsible if you have driven your wife away. She knew that if she told me I should have to tell you."

"But she tells me that you will join her," he said, holding up the letter in his shaking hand.

"Yes sir. When the business is settled I am to join her. I always loved Miss Marian, and I would go to the ends of the earth with her. She will let me know where to go when things are ready."

"And you mean to hide from me where my wife is?" he said, grasping her arm, rudely.

"Mr. Phillips, don't forget to be a gentleman!" said the woman, trembling. "I tell you again that this is your own doing, your own affair, and not mine. If my young mistress wishes me to serve her, it isn't for you, or any one else, to illtreat me for doing it. If you can get your wife to go back to you, I am sure I have no objection. You had time enough to see her if you had chosen. She was here five weeks, crying over her dead mother, and over her other troubles. She never slept a night of those five weeks, but walked the floor, and wrung her hands, and cried till she had no tears left. I tell you, Mr. Phillips," the woman went on, warming with her subject, "if that sweet lady had committed every crime in the calendar, she has suffered enough to be deserving of forgiveness now. She had no more color in her face when she went away than that sheet of paper has, and, indeed, for the matter of that, when she came. She has lost flesh, and was so hollow round her beautiful eyes that an old friend might not have known her. I'll venture to say, sir, that you might look in her face in the city street and never know her."

Mrs. Lennon stopped here, for the tears that had been gathering burst forth in spite of her, and she covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud.

"Why did she not wait for me to come?" asked the husband, faintly.

He had sunk into his chair again, and his own mouth was unsteady. In spite of his just anger, this picture of his beautiful wife, so fallen, so wretched, touched him to the heart. The housekeeper wiped her eyes.

"She did wait five weeks," she replied, dryly. "And each one of those weeks was, I'll be bound, longer to her than any year she had ever known before."

The husband buried his face in his hands for a moment, a faint misgiving thrilling him. Had he done quite right?

"You will write to her?" he asked, lifting his face again.

"Not till I hear from her," was the

answer. "I do not know how to direct."

"You have no idea of the direction which she has taken?" he asked, with a searching suspicious glance.

"I have already told you, sir," the woman replied, with some heat. "I am not afraid of telling you the truth."

He got up and began to pace the room. Even in his misery it hurt his pride that this person should be the confidant of his domestic troubles.

"Will you tell me what Mrs. Phillips said to you about our misunderstanding?" he said, without looking up, a deep flush sweeping over his face as he spoke.

"She told me no particulars, sir," was the answer. "I only know that there was trouble, and that she did not expect that it would ever be made up. But, sir, that is a true and tender heart, and one that loves you dearly; and whatever you may complain of, may God forgive you only as you forgive her!"

He looked hastily up. "True and tender heart!" he thought. "Surely this woman could have no idea of the nature of Marian's offence." He felt relieved from a load of shame.

"Loved me dearly!" he echoed, mockingly. "You are well-informed?"

"I am indeed, sir!" she retorted, with emphasis. "Listen to me. It was your name that was always on her lips when she sobbed and wept, as I listened outside the door in hope that she would stop and go to sleep. And once, sir, she went away, and had got away a half day's journey, but came back because she had left your miniature behind. And it was no easy matter for her to travel, weak as she was; and no easy matter for her to get away either without being known. The people here think that she has not gone, but keeps her room. When she went she walked four miles to the next station, and her trunks were sent away by express before she went."

"Leave me! leave me!" cried the husband, hiding his face again.

He sat long without moving after she had gone. The sweet thought would nestle into his heart in spite of his incredulity, in spite of her avowed and acted love for another, that his wife did love him. He sat revolving the subject in his mind, trying to reconcile the contradicting facts, and to understand the heart which could so belie its own emotions. For twenty years she had been

a true and loving wife to him; and against the evidence of that fact he could oppose but the proof of one momentary scene. But what damning proof that had been! He took up her letter and read it again.

"I do not know whether you mean ever to write to or to see me again," she wrote. "But I can bear this waiting no longer. I understand quite well that you discarded me. I remember your last words. Do not fear that I shall ever forget them."

"I ask for no mercy. If I have not deceived you the way you think, I have deceived you in another. I was wrong, but I suffered. Let all that pass. I did not know but that you might wish to make some arrangement which should prevent scandal, and I have waited here for that. Waited in what torture I will not say. It is now too late. Only to-day I received a letter from Mrs. Allyn, in which she plainly indicates her conviction that there is trouble between us."

"I am going away from you forever. I shall take another name, and shall be independent of you. I suppose that you would not wish me to suffer poverty, and you need not fear that. My mother left me enough to make me comfortable in the mode of life which I shall choose. The purchase money of the house will be brought to me by Mrs. Lennon, who will wait for that, and also to see if you have any wishes to express. "Do not venture to doubt that my future life will be as pure as I would wish my own Lily's to be! I cannot trust myself to write of her. Tell her what you will."

"But one word more. I love you, Edward, and you alone; and, since the days of my foolish girlhood, I have never loved any other. However appearances have been against me, I have been a true wife to you, and have deserved no man's scorn, and encouraged no man's light love. Farewell, my beloved. May God comfort your heart, for I know that I have broken it, and that it would hurt you less to love me, even now, if you could, than it does to hate me, as I know you do."

This was written in unsteady characters, and so blotted by tears as to be in some places nearly illegible.

"How soon do you expect to be able to go away?" asked Mr. Phillips, when he had recalled the housekeeper.

"In a week, if I am called," she answered.

"Will you take with you a letter to my wife?" he asked; and she noticed the tender emphasis with which he lingered on that name.

"I will, sir," she replied.

"I wish her to come back so that no scandal may be made," he said. "I cannot avoid telling my daughter and her aunt that there has been a misunderstanding. But I shall make no explanation, and shall request them to ask no questions. They will suppose that Mrs. Philips is here, till I hear from her. If you are a friend to Mrs. Philips, you will wish her to return to her home."

"I am her friend, sir, and I do wish her to return to you if she can be kindly received," the woman said.

"You have no right to make any question of the manner in which I shall receive my wife!" he said, haughtily; then added, "I suppose that I can stay here to-night?"

"Certainly, sir!" she answered, with ready hospitality. "Everything is at your command. Shall I get you some supper?"

"No. Or, stay, I would like a cup of strong coffee. And if you will bring me pen and ink I will write the letter which I wish you to deliver."

Far into the night he sat there and wrote, letter after letter, destroying as soon as one was written. The first was one of dignified coldness, but his heart would not hold out to the end. He threw the sheet into the fire, and wrote one which was kind and forgiving. But the thought of that pale thin face with the sunken eyes, of her weary return journey to get his miniature, of her sobbing out his name in her miserable vigils; all swept over him and carried away the last chill of pride, the last spark of anger. Marian loved him! In some inexplicable way she was true to him. He would doubt the evidence of his senses sooner than doubt her. Moved by these feelings, his last letter was one of fervent and forgiving love. Let her come back to him, and all would be forgiven, if indeed she loved him. Never in all the days of their union had he so poured out his heart to her—never owned, even to himself, how utterly valueless life would be to him without her.

Then, when he had expressed all his longing, his love, his forgiveness, for the

first time since that bitter day a feeling of relief came over him. She never could resist that, he thought, and sighed a load off his heart as he sealed the letter. Having done so, he threw himself on the sofa and slept soundly till morning.

## CHAPTER XIV.

"A sudden little river crossed my path,  
As unexpected as a serpent comes,"

LILY received her father with open arms, and in the first flush of her joy did not perceive anything peculiar in his appearance. The excitement and embarrassment of his position gave him a color which hid his loss of flesh, and any other change in his appearance was easily accounted for, by the long and tiresome journey from which it was supposed that he had but just then arrived.

"And now we will have mamma home," said Lily, when the first welcome was over.

"I hope so!" he said; then, rising hastily, added, "I would like to speak with you a few minutes, Mrs. Allyn."

Coloring nervously, Mrs. Allyn led the way to another room. Her older eyes had seen traces of wear and suffering which the daughter's young eyes had not marked, and she felt surely that something was wrong, though what she could not think. Her cousin's dignity and delicacy, as well as her love for her husband, had always been too conspicuous to allow her to suspect Marian of any imprudence, and she could imagine no other trouble likely to create a division in so united a family.

"Now, papa!" cried Lily, as he was going out of the room, "I feel slighted! Not only do you go away in two minutes, before I am well sure that you are really here, but you have secrets to tell which I may not hear."

He kissed the smiling pouting mouth, and answered her as lightly as she had spoken:

"I am going to inquire after your conduct. I wish to know what lovers you have had since I went away."

Mrs. Allyn sat down while he carefully closed the door after them, and looked in his face with anxious expectation. She saw, now that the color and the smile had faded, how pale and thin he had grown,

and marked, too, how full of suppressed agitation his manner was.

"I have a word to say which may offend you," he began, immediately, speaking in a hurried way. "It may offend, because I tell so little; but I do not feel it right to tell any more till I am myself satisfied. May I count on your indulgence?"

"Certainly!" she answered, growing a little pale.

He went nearer her, declining the seat she offered him, and standing so that she could not see his face.

"Marian and I have a misunderstanding," he said, very low and hastily. "I went away that our estrangement might not be observed by others, and to get time to think. We have had no communication since. I hope that she may not be so much to blame as I at first supposed, but it will be impossible for us to come together in a way to blind the eyes of the family. If our reconciliation should be ever so perfect, Lily and others will yet see that it is a reconciliation. I wish for your assistance to hide as much as may be hidden. Lily must know something. I leave it to you to decide how much, and what. Let it be as little as possible. And let me entreat that you will ask me no questions, and allow her to ask me none."

He paused, panting like one out of breath.

There was no hysterical weakness, or idle curiosity in the Leslie blood, and Mrs. Allyn did credit to her family. After the first start and stare of utter astonishment and distress, she had herself in hand.

"As Marian's nearest living relative, Mr. Phillips," she said, "you must acknowledge that I have a right to know something of what so nearly concerns her happiness. Still, I am sure that you mean to do rightly in whatever extraordinary circumstances may have occurred. Of course, I cannot think what imprudence could have been committed by a lady of Marian's position and character. No breath of blame ever soiled her. But, at your request, I refrain from questions. I should say that there is no need whatever of any explanation being made to Lily. It is quite inadvisable, if matters are to be arranged immediately. The young are none too keen-sighted, and Lily's mind will be taken up with other things. I suppose that you intend to go to Marian?"

Mrs. Allyn's head was a little up, and her

color had begun to rise while asserting her family dignity, and the last question was put with a little imperiousness.

Mr. Phillips shrank.

"I do not know where she is," he said, almost in a whisper.

"Why, at her mother's, of course!" was the astonished reply.

"I have just come from there," he said.

"My God!" exclaimed Mrs. Allyn, for the first time losing her self-possession. "You don't mean to say that Marian has disappeared!"

"She thinks that I am displeased with her beyond reconciliation," the husband answered, with a moan in his voice. "She has gone away, but is to send her address to Mrs. Lennon, who will join her then. I left a letter with Mrs. Lennon to give her, and no wife could ask more than that letter contains."

Mrs. Allyn made a haughty gesture, as if sweeping aside with her small hands the presumptuous housekeeper. "Does that woman, then, know more of Mrs. Phillips's affairs and locality than her own family do? Does she presume to withhold Marian's address from you?"

"Marian did not tell her, but will write her very soon," was the answer. "I tried to find out, but could not. I think that Mrs. Lennon knows nothing more than you yourself know, but, having no home of her own, and being an old servant, and much attached to the family, she is willing to devote herself entirely to my wife. She is anxious that Marian should come back, and will do what she can. She will give her the letter, at least, and in that I ask Marian to write and give me her address, even if she does not wish to return."

"The woman must know more, Mr. Phillips," said the lady, with an air of angry pride. "She is an old and confidential servant, and I always thought that Aunt Leslie gave her too many liberties. She seemed to know more about affairs there than any one of the rest of us did. If I were to see that woman I would make her tell."

The lady's black eyes sparkled in a way that did not indicate very gentle handling of Mrs. Lennon, in case the two should meet, and her sallow cheeks burnt with a haughty anger.

"I really think you mistake," Mr. Phillips replied. "I thought, at first, as you do, but changed my mind."

"And you mean to wait and trust to her?" demanded Mrs. Allyn, looking at her companion, in indignant surprise.

"I must wait till the housekeeper hears from Marian, because I have no other way," was the reply. "But I have not left everything with her. I have a trusty detective who has his eye on her, and will watch wherever she goes. When she starts on her journey he will follow her, and give me immediate notice of her destination."

"A detective! A detective!" repeated the lady, coloring violently.

"O, he has no name but Mrs. Lennon's," interposed the gentleman, jealously. "She will let no one know that she is to join Mrs. Phillips, and the man will not connect the two together, not knowing that my wife is away from me. He suspects that it is an affair of money, and that we are not sure of her honesty. I did not put him on that track, but when I saw that he was there, I could not say anything. You cannot doubt that I shall find her, as soon as possible."

Mrs. Allyn leaned her brow upon her hand, and thought for a minute.

"There is no other way," she said, presently, speaking with an air of promptness and authority. "You must find Marian, as soon as possible, and prevent people from suspecting any trouble. There must be no scandal, and she must be treated as she deserves. Poor dear Marian! What a blow to her pride, and to her heart, this must be! and how she has suffered and concealed her suffering during the time she was away! You were too long in thinking the matter over, whatever it may have been, Mr. Phillips!" And Mrs. Allyn gave him an angrily flashing glance through her tears.

He said nothing, and she went on:

"Lily must know nothing about it. I will take her to Washington immediately. Alice and Fred will be delighted to go, and Mr. Allyn must content himself without us. Leave all to me."

Even in speaking, Mrs. Allyn's face flushed with a new and sudden thought.

"Mr. Phillips," she said, breathlessly, "you told me not to ask any questions. But, if it should be possible that you are laboring under a misconception, that you suspect Marian of some fault, rather than know her to have committed one—if I may suspect things which would explain—"

"If it be so, tell me!" he said, eagerly, as she paused. "I will answer any questions."

"Is there anything about Mr. Frank Hazeltine?" she asked, with her keen eyes on his face.

The sudden rush of color and the angry flash in his eyes answered her, though he spoke no word.

She went on eagerly.

"I know nothing—I only suspect," she said. "But I have had an idea, for a long time, that Frank is a member of our own family—in fine, that he is Marian's own brother, but not Aunt Leslie's child."

The face of the listener showed the intense emotion with which he heard, but still he did not speak.

"I think that Marian never suspected such a thing," she went on, "till there was talk of Frank and Lily, but Aunt Leslie knew it all the time. When she heard the rumor, she sent for Marian, and told her. I think that is the explanation. Does it fit the case?"

"O Marian, my darling!" he cried. "How I have wronged her, if it be so! But why should she have hesitated to tell me? It was, surely, not so bad as my suspicion. It was not her fault."

"I can't tell," Mrs. Allyn said. "Do you think that the young man knows—"

"He and Marian have a perfect understanding," he said, with a shiver. "Do you ever see him?"

"No, he avoids us. We have not seen him since you and Marian left."

It was hard for Mr. Phillips to parry Lily's questions, and to resist her entreaties to let her accompany him to her mother. But, buoyed up by hope, he passed the ordeal without attracting too much notice to himself, and promising, most sincerely, to bring her mother home as soon as possible, he managed to get away. He did not leave the city, but, living alone in his house, from which Mrs. Allyn was to keep Lily, he waited impatiently for news of Mrs. Lennon's movements.

With a burning cheek he wrote a letter to Lily, at Mrs. Allyn's dictation, sending it to Mrs. Lennon, to mail. By return of mail he received a note from the housekeeper. She had mailed the letter, as desired. She had also received a letter from Marian, and should start the day after that on which she was writing him. Would de-



liver his letter to Mrs. Phillips, and do all that she had promised. Had no doubt that Mrs. Phillips would gladly write him on learning that it was his desire.

He read the note with a highly beating heart. Now he should know. This detective was able and faithful, and would not fail to track her. He had directions to telegraph his employer when he stopped, and to remain on watch till Mr. Phillips should arrive to relieve him.

Meantime, Lily had been so encouraged by her father's return, and by the hope of soon seeing her mother, that she was ready to regret the loss of her visit to Washington, when her aunt proposed going. And, though her father's letter disappointed her, and she felt, at first, unwilling to go without them, she was persuaded, at last, and began her preparations, though with but little spirit.

She scarcely liked to own it to herself, for, with a girl's romance, she was rather proud of being constant, even to a foolish and unhappy partiality, but she could not but be aware that Frank Hazeltine's image was not so vivid in her mind as it had been. Her anxiety for her father and mother, and also her interest in Frederick Allyn, had helped to weaken the hold on that affection which the young man's continued absence had already shaken. The feeling was yet strong enough to be revived by his presence, but she got tired of looking for him in vain. Moreover, there was no feeling of jealousy to stimulate her love. No one seemed to think particularly of him, and when he was mentioned, which was seldom, it was with a cool friendliness equally devoid of any appearance of interest for or against. It needs more character than most persons, particularly than most young girls, have, to keep up an interest in a person whom nobody seems to care anything about, and whom one does not see nor hear from; unless, indeed, one knows that person to be in danger or suffering, which is always a claim on the generous heart. But Lily had no reason to suppose that Mr. Hazeltine was at all disturbed in mind or body.

For her Cousin Fred, as she called him, she certainly was not in love with him, and did not expect to be. But she was interested in him, flattered by his graceful hom-age, and rather inclined to like him, particularly as a friend. Altogether, her mind was, as Mrs. Allyn had predicted, so taken

up with other things that it was not hard to blind her, and she started with them on their journey without much hesitation.

Once they were away, Mr. Phillips breathed more freely. He must soon hear from Marian, and he doubted not that her pride would lead her to hasten home and prevent all remark on the scattering of their household. He waited impatiently to hear from Rand the detective. The man had started with Mrs. Lennon, and they had now been three days gone, but no word from him. His employer was beginning to fret, and to fear that he had allowed the woman to slip from him. The three days grew to a week, to a fortnight, and still no word. Could Marian have gone to Europe, and his messenger be on her track? Anywhere on this continent, he thought, he must have heard sooner.

Entirely absorbed in this one subject, everything else was indifferent to him. Business was a disgust, he would have nothing to do with it; stocks rose or fell, people married or died, battles were lost or won, he cared nothing. All his heart and soul went out, more and more, after that one being, his world, who wandered in sadness away from her fireside, and from the safe shelter of his love. Let crowns fall, but give him the crown of his life—his beautiful, his beloved! He scarcely gave a thought, even to what everybody was talking of—the terrible loss of the steamer *Orion*, burnt on her way from New York to New Orleans. It was a sad thing, undoubtedly—so few being saved—but his heart was oppressed with a nearer sadness. He looked vacantly over the lists that were published of the saved and the lost, but looked as one who saw not.

But one day, three weeks after Mrs. Lennon's departure, chancing to look over a complete list of the lost passengers, his eyes opened with a sudden flash of interest, only to grow wild with despair the next instant. For there were the two names of those to whom he looked for help. Among the lost were Mr. Jackson Rand and Mrs. Helen Lennon. And with them was lost all help, except such as the place of their destination afforded. New Orleans was the port for which they sailed; and after the first overwhelming blow had lightened, then he resolved to go.

A hasty note was written to Mrs. Allyn, his business arranged with feverish haste,

then he started. But first he put in every principal paper in the country carefully worded advertisements which might meet Marian's eye:

“ The person who was lost on the steamer Orion, while on her way to join her friend, had a letter from P. to M., entreating her

to return, or to send her address. Do not delay. All may be concealed.”

He enclosed this notice with the money to the papers, directing it to be continued for a month, then, with a burning heart, started on his quest.

[CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

## MARIAN LESLIE'S HUSBAND:

—OR,—

### A WORM IN THE BUD.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

[CONCLUDED.]

[This Story was commenced in the June Number of the Magazine.]

#### CHAPTER XV.

"I've cased the rubies of thy smiles,  
In rich and triply-plated gold;  
But *this* no other wealth defiles,  
Itself itself can only hold—  
The stealthy kiss on Maple wold."

It was the night of the English ambassador's reception, and the capital was alert. Lady N—— was a new-comer, and, having been ill, and unable to go out much, was still an object of curiosity. Besides, this was her first reception, and everybody wanted to know who was invited.

"My dears," Mrs. Allyn had said, on receiving the card, "I have half a mind—"

"Is that all, mother?" laughed Fred, as she paused, meditatively.

"Fred, keep silence!" his sister interposed. "The mysteries of the toilet are being discussed."

He subsided immediately into a chair behind Lily, where he sat watching the lovely droop of her shoulders, and the milky whiteness of her beautiful neck.

"Yes," continued the elder lady, speaking with the solemnity which the occasion demanded, "I will. I will send to Stewart's for new overdresses. Those ever-present Turners have got dresses like every one of ours, and I saw a lady at the levee last night with a pink tissue like yours, Alice."

"What shall we have?" both girls asked, with some interest.

"Leave that to me," was the answer, Mrs. Allyn priding herself on her taste in dress. "They shall be here in time. Give no thought to the matter."

And lovely enough the girls looked on that night, as they came down all dressed, followed by a buzz of admiration, as they tripped through the hall at Willard's. And yet the dress of both was very simple. Lily wore blue tulle over white silk, and a bunch

of English violets in her glistening gold braids; and Alice's somewhat colder beauty was warmed by the faint glow from a robe of lustrous rustling rose-color, and a half-blown pink rose at her temple. Mrs. Allyn made herself as dignified as possible in lavender moire, with black lace, and by a careful application of powder and rouge, and with the slight excitement of going out kindling her black eyes, really made a very fine woman. But perhaps the most noticeable member of the party was Mr. Frederick. His calm bright eyes, satiny flaxen hair, his regular features, pure and pale, and a certain loftiness of air, gave him a decidedly patrician look; and when Lady N—— averred that he was the perfect counterpart of the young Earl of Clyde, her ladyship's cousin, Mr. Frederick became immediately the fashion. Mammas smiled on him, daughters gave him flashing glances from behind their fans, and young men glowered at him, and tried to assume his expression of countenance.

"Here comes Count Fosco, and I see Mr. Jounson across the room," Mrs. Allyn said to her son. "You must go away from us. It will never do for our party to remain stuck together like burrs all the evening. I wish that you would be attentive to Miss De Roeth this evening, Fred."

Miss De Roeth, a gay brunette, a belle and an heiress, was very well pleased to have this new star for an attendant, and lavished her smiles on him. Utterly untroubled by any timid scruples, she gave him no chance to escape her.

"These English people have such a stiff way of receiving," she said, in a silvery half-whisper, leaning on his arm, as they promenaded the long saloon, her gold-colored draperies flowing about her, and trailing far behind. "Did you notice the way Lord N—— bows? He seems to have but

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one joint in his body, and that in the small of his back. Then his neckkerchief! One quite pities him. Lady N—— is well enough, but not at all grand. One needs to be told that she is an earl's granddaughter. And such plain ways! Mamma and I called on her as soon as she came, and what do you think she wore? A plain brown silk, a linen collar, and no gloves! Mamma protested that it must be the housekeeper."

"Truly horrible!" said Mr. Frederick, looking as disgusted as he could.

"So it was, though you sneer," she chatted on. "How pretty your sisters are! I wouldn't own it, if they were not blonde. I am not afraid of blondes," glancing up at him with saucy brown eyes like dusky jewels.

"You need fear no one," he replied, gallantly. "But only one is my sister. The other is my cousin."

"Which is the cousin?"

"Golden-hair!"

"Are you in love with her?" inquired the young lady.

"Certainly!" he replied, coolly.

"I don't believe it. Fair-haired gentlemen prefer brunettes. But she is in love with you, and is frantic with jealousy at this moment. I'm going to drive her wild. Hold my fan, wont you? And please to look at me when I am talking to you. Here's a flower from my bouquet. Fasten it in your buttonhole. That is well done. Now, if you know how to look bewitched, look so at once. I saw her dart a fiery glance this way a minute ago. She will look again. There, smile quick. She's looking. It's great fun. Now let us sit down by this curtain, and talk all by ourselves. Romantic, isn't it?"

Sitting there, and listening to his companion, who did not require him to speak, Frederick Allyn watched the brilliant moving throng. Congress was in session, and of course my lady received the most notable people in Washington. Uniforms of different nations mingled with the black coats of civilians, and outshone the ladies, even gay as they were. The cabinet, the diplomatic circle, foreigners of distinction, and the cream of that society which gathers at the capital every winter, mingled in the varying kaleidoscope that sparkled before their eyes. The soft hum of conversation sounded in intervals of the music, and one saw every moment beautiful or notable groups, apart

from the throng, pause, say a few words, then melt to form new combinations.

"It is highly improper for us to be sitting apart here so long," Miss De Roeth said, with great satisfaction. "It will look as though we were crazy about each other. Mamma has been looking back this way these ten minutes. I quite enjoy it. She would come and take me off if she dared; but she knows I'd do worse. If I see her coming, I'll take you out on to the balcony. That would be the finishing stroke. A balcony scene is always a love scene, and has been from Romeo and Juliet down. That cousin of yours has looked here five times. I counted. See! I pinched a finger each time she looked, and this time it's the thumb. You can see the pink marks on each finger, I was so delighted to give a good squeeze."

He looked as she held a lily-white hand up to him, but failed to see any pink, except at the taper rosy finger-tips. He bent his head, and took the hand that almost placed itself in his, and at the same moment the young lady gave a little laugh of ecstatic delight.

"That's six times!" she exclaimed. "And it's worth the other five; for you looked as though you were kissing my hand."

Frederick looked, and saw his cousin standing on the opposite side of the room, leaning on the arm of a distinguished senator, who was an old friend of her father. Her slight form, with that vanishing blue mist about it, looked to be something almost too delicately frail, beside his large and stately figure. There was a spiritual look in her lily of a face, and, looking at her glistening crown of hair, one might fancy her some picture of a young saint, and not a breathing mortal. She and her escort were the centre of a group, and many an eye turned admiringly on her, as she watched and listened to him, her clear eyes lifted to his face with an expression of almost childish admiration, and a faint smile just parting her lips.

One and another joined them, and, turning to bow to some introduction of their host, the bunch of violets in Lily's hair loosened, and scattered at her feet. Instantly they were appropriated by gallant hands, and the girl stood blushing at her pretty mishap, and smiling to see her colors so worn. Lady N——, standing near,

loosened a cluster of blue myrtle-flowers from her bouquet, and smilingly fastened them in that golden hair.

"Now isn't that provoking?" cried Miss De Roeth, rising in a pet. "Nothing so nice as that has happened to me all the evening. I'm going to take Mr. S—— away from your cousin. I'll plague her, if I live. Look at those ninnies with English violets in their buttonholes! Black and blue! Was ever anything so odious?"

Frederick had thought that his companion's talk about Lily's jealous glances was pure invention; but when he joined her he could not fail to perceive a change. She did not seem to see him for some time, and then looked past rather than at him. And when Miss De Roeth at length succeeded in carrying the senator away from her, she immediately commenced a gay conversation with some one else, evidently in order to avoid speaking with her cousin.

"Have you been in the supper-room, Lily?" he asked, finding chance for a word.

"O yes, long ago!" she replied, over her shoulder.

"Miss Philips, I have just discovered some marvellous confections on the supper-table," said a gentleman at her other elbow.

"O, show them to me, by all means!" said Lily, taking his arm with alacrity.

Her cousin bowed profoundly, and stood out of their way, Lily-pulling her skirts away from him with a little twitch in passing, and walking with her head very high. He looked after her, sighing, but not too sad. He knew that Lily's temper was of that kind which is vulgarly called peppery; but, then, she was so beautiful! Besides, this anger did not bode ill for his hopes.

Half an hour afterwards, as he stood alone on the balcony, looking out down the broad and stately avenue, Lily and her escort stepped out, without perceiving him.

"It is cold," she said; "but I wish to stand here a few minutes. The rooms are close. Perhaps you will bring me my scarf from the supper-room."

The gentleman went immediately at her bidding, and Frederick was at his cousin's side the instant the curtain dropped.

"Can it be that you are angry with me?" he asked, hastily, putting his arm around her.

"What should I be angry with you for?" she asked, somewhat tremulously, half withdrawing from him.

"Say that you are not!" he whispered. "You know that I care for no one but you, darling. Say that you are not angry."

"Certainly not!" she answered, proudly. "You are talking nonsense. You may care for whom you like."

"Then I'll care for you, since I can't help it, though you are ever so unkind. I'll stay away from you, since you wish it. Only give me a good-by kiss before I go."

She leaned against his arm, but turned her face away.

"Lily," he said, "you have kissed your Cousin Fred in times past. Kiss your lover now!"

She turned her blossom of a face, and took the kiss he gave, her breath lingering on his cheek. And at the instant they heard her cavalier returning.

"Don't stay away long!" she whispered, softly, as her lover turned away triumphant.

## CHAPTER XVI.

"A nightingale's lone note arose, yet trembled on the ether,  
So slender was the thread that held silence and song together."

For two months Edward Philips searched New Orleans, every day baffled, yet always lured by some ghost of a hope. He searched high and low, in hotels and boarding-houses, gradually descending the scale. Then, with shuddering heart, he went to hospitals, to religious homes, and pressed to look at every dead face.

One evening, as he wandered wearily through the street, a strain of music made him pause, and, looking up a broad lighted staircase, he saw the outer baize doors of a concert-hall. Why not go in, and try to forget his care for a moment? he thought.

A gentleman was just retiring from the stage when he entered the hall, and, taking a bill from the hands of an attendant, he looked for the next piece.

"*Pieta Signore.*"

Anything but that! He could not then listen to Marian's favorite hymn. He turned hastily to go out, and had reached the door, when the first melodious heart-breaking note was flung out, and held him like a lasso. He stood motionless, and listened without turning. Every tone, every inflection, every tremulous faltering, every phrase strong and steady with passion—all was embalmed in his heart.

At the last note he turned impulsively and blindly towards the stage, and began forcing his way back. Dimly he saw before him a figure clad in black from head to foot, close-covered neck and arms, a wealth of clustering hair about the majestic head, and a pale perfect face, from which the flush of her singing had just faded.

He saw more. He saw the stately form stop suddenly in turning away, saw two white hands upraised, then clasped on the breast; and he heard a faint cry, as she stood with her face turned toward him. He stood motionless before her, fixing her there with his gaze, in which there was as much assurance as command. The white hands reached towards him, then fell at her side. There was a staggering step, then she fell heavily forward, blood bursting over her lips. But she fell into his arms.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"Let's contend no more, Love,  
Strive nor weep—  
All be as before, Love,  
Only sleep!"

MARIAN PHILIPS opened her eyes in a strange room, quite unlike her little bare dormitory at the Sisters. Lace curtains veiled her bed, she lay in fine linen, downy white wool, and wrought cover. Through the lace she caught glimpses of dark wood carving, of long windows swathed in purple drapery, and of the rich warm glow of a fire of sparkling coal. At the head of her bed stood a little stand with snowy cover, bearing a tray of vials, a wineglass half full of deep-hued wine, and a tiny vase of flowers. An armchair stood vacant near the bed, and on the carpet before this chair lay a gentleman's glove. The dreamy languor of her awakening broke up at sight of that glove. It was dark-green, fine of make and texture, such a glove as her husband always wore when he could. He had often said that green best suited his tawny complexion.

At her faint startled sigh a soft step sounded near, and one of the sisters appeared, bending over her with smiling placid face.

"Dear sister, where am I?" she whispered.

"In the French consul's house, dear. He has gone away to Natchez for a few weeks, and we are in possession of the

house till you get well. No one but ourselves and servants. I came here very early this morning, to nurse you back to health. Now don't talk much."

The invalid pointed to the glove, and the nun, blushing slightly, picked it up, and was about taking it away, but was stopped by a whisper.

"Please give it to me!"

She gave it, and Marian burst into tears, as she pressed it to her lips.

"Now, my dear friend!" said the sister, coaxingly. "You must keep calm. Trust in God, and all will be right. If you make yourself worse, you will grieve one who loves you."

Marian controlled her emotion as best she could, and lay with closed eyes, and the mute witness of her husband's presence pressed to her cheek. Some lulling perfume and sound stole over her, soothing her growing excitement; some faint echo seemed to repeat, "Trust in God, and all will be right;" some soft and slumberous touch mesmerised her, and she slept.

There was one who came and looked at her there, his heart aching with pain and tenderness. So pale and worn she looked, such long sighs she gave for breathing! And what was that so closely held between hand and cheek? Looking nearer, Edward Philips saw that it was his own glove which had such tender caressing. The sight quite melted him, bringing the blinding tears to his eyes, and filling his heart with such tender passion that he could scarcely restrain himself from waking her.

Drawing the armchair softly close to the side of the pillow, he sat in it, and leaned to encircle her head with his arm. Her breath stirred his beard as he bent over her, and his lips almost touched her hair. If she sighed in her sleep, he whispered some loving word, as though she could hear it; and if she stirred, he held his breath.

Marian had slept nearly an hour when she woke again, with the consciousness that some one was near. She felt such sweetness, such peace! She must be at home, and just waking after an ill dream. She heard soft breathing, and as she crept nearer to it, without opening her eyes, a kiss just brushed her forehead. She opened her eyes, and met those of her husband. Ah! whatever had happened, through whatever grief she had passed, this was joy!

"My darling!" he said; "you are better!"

When, with clearing memory, she would have shrunk, or have said some word of sorrow, he checked her.

"If you love me, Marian, do not shrink from me. Let the rest go. And we want no explanations now. You must forget everything but that you are to get well as soon as possible, so as to go home. Lily will expect us before long. I wrote her that we were taking a little journey."

To be taken back so, without a reproach or a question!

"But you do not know!" she gasped.

"I know that I cannot live without you," he said, sadly. "I say, now, let the rest go. Whatever the past has been, we have the future."

She sighed, and resigned herself to be so forgiven and so loved.

In two days she was well enough to start, and they went on board the Northern steamer as quietly as possible, to escape the host of Madame Anna's admirers who had besieged the house, and who were wild with curiosity about these mysterious doings, and with disappointment at her broken engagements.

The first joy of meeting over, both felt a heavy depression. There were revelations to be made, and while one suffered, knowing how hard they would be, the other was in a fever of suspense from not knowing. But each strove to cover this inward trouble with a veil of calmness, and as much of cheerfulness as might be.

The voyage was a swift and prosperous one, but Marian, who hated the water, was quite prostrated by it. In the long spring afternoons she would lie on deck, supported by her husband's arm, and breathe the fresh breezes that followed them out of the south, and watch the play of marvellous coloring on the waves. The sun would drop in the west, incarnadining the whole sea and sky. Then the colors would melt, the crests of waves would change from ruby to rose, from rose to silver; long azure, and green, and amber reaches of water grew black; and there was only the silver glint here and there, the white wake that foamed behind, and the sparkle of diamond spray about their bows; while overhead, in the transparent purple, hung the stars that seemed like a golden shower, all ready to fall, and be quenched in the ocean. On the

night before they arrived there stole out, as they watched the fading sunset, a thread of a crescent moon that grew brighter and brighter, floating its little golden skiff among those rosy waves, and steering down the west.

Marian Philips's eyes caught a light from it, seeing in it some omen for good. But the next instant her heart uprose with a bitter cry. All the old times started up before her, the laughing wishing with the new moon over her right shoulder, the walks by moonlight, the happy happy days, now gone forever.

"Let me lie down," she said, faintly, to her husband; and, leaning heavily on him, she went to her stateroom.

"You do not feel well to-night, dear?" he asked, tenderly.

"I am tired," she said, evasively; and, burying her face in her pillow, seemed to forget his good-night kiss.

"To-morrow we shall be at home," she thought; "and then he must know all. O my God!"

He bent over her a moment.

"Marian, my wife, to-morrow we shall be at home again. With my whole heart, I thank God. Now we both know how to prize it."

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

"All is blue again  
After last night's rain."

MR. PHILIPS had sent orders to have his house opened and in order before his arrival; and had also requested Mrs. Allyn to keep Lily away and in ignorance of her mother's arrival yet one week longer. He did not wish her to come home till all misunderstandings should be settled.

It was well that he had done so, for Marian was quite prostrated by fatigue and agitation when they arrived. The sight of the house which she had left in such bitter misery, and which she now approached with such uncertain prospects, was too much for her. When the carriage stopped, and she saw the door open, with the servants standing in smiling welcoming, she turned away her face, and sank back fainting on the seat.

A gentleman passing on the other side of the street had seen this arrival, and when the carriage stopped, his pale face had taken a deep flush of red. He involuntarily

paused, then forced himself to go on, but could not resist the impulse to glance backward. Doing so, he stopped with a start, growing pale again. Two men were bearing a lady up the steps, and he had a glimpse of her white face as they disappeared in the doorway.

Frank Hazeltine stood motionless for a moment, tortured by a cruel uncertainty. He could not go on, and he dared not go back. Could that deathlike face belong to Marian Philips? And might it not be indeed death? While he looked the door opened again, and a servant girl came hastily out, and ran down the street toward him.

"Ellen," he said, stopping her, "what is the matter?"

"O Mr. Hazeltine, I can't stop," she panted. "Mrs. Philips is dying. I must run to the druggist for some wine. The wine-cellar is locked, and the key is lost, and O, I mustn't wait another minute."

Frank Hazeltine strode toward the house which he had left so ignominiously, and running up the steps, rang the bell loudly. He walked past the servant without any questions, and entered the parlor. On a sofa lay the still senseless form of the returned wanderer, and by the side of it knelt the husband, chafing her hands. A servant was sprinkling cologne, and lamenting.

At the sound of a step Mr. Philips lifted his head, and the eyes of the two men flashed together.

"Leave the room, and shut the door after you, Ann," the master of the house said to his servant.

"She's opening her eyes, sir," said Ann.

"Well, go as I bid you," he said; and Ann reluctantly went.

"Well, sir?" said Mr. Philips, in a stern voice, and with a glance which few men could have met unflinchingly.

But this intruder seemed scarcely to be aware of him then. His eyes, full of an adoring and anguished fondness, were fixed on that face that had slowly turned toward him, and he went boldly to her side and knelt there, dropping his face to the trembling hand which she extended to him. Then Marian closed her eyes and sighed faintly, her lips pressed close. The hour had come!

Mr. Philips had released his wife's hand as the other knelt by her, but his voice was gentle as he spoke.

"Marian, what is this young man to you?"

Frank Hazeltine lifted his head, and gave the speaker a look of incredulous astonishment.

"Did you not know?" he began; but the other waved him haughtily to be silent, and still looked to her for an answer.

She looked at him steadily for one moment, such a weight of sorrow in her solemn eyes, such a look of pallid despair in her face.

"Edward, he is my son!"

Her husband sprang to his feet as though electrified.

"Impossible!" he cried, hotly. "Are you insane? What does it mean?"

His passion seemed to give her strength, rather than to agitate her. She raised herself slightly, and spoke with perfect calmness.

"I have deceived you, Edward, and I have no excuse to offer; but my deception was not so great as you may think. The time has come to tell you all, and I want no more delay. But let your indignation fall on me, and not on this poor boy, who has been wronged enough already. Frank," she said, softly, laying her hand on his bowed head, "you had best go now. Do not fear for me, my son. I am much better. Some time I will see you again, but it must be as Mr. Philips decides. My duty is to him, dear, and I must make such reparation to him as I can. Go now, and try not to be too unhappy about me."

The son kissed the hand he held, and, rising, left the room without a word.

"Will not you sit by me while I tell you all the truth?" she asked, in her sad calm voice, looking at her husband, who had been looking at her like one in a dream.

"Good God!" he muttered, with his hand to his forehead, as he mechanically took a chair at a little distance from her. "Am I awake, or asleep? This is surely impossible. The fellow is not more than ten years younger than you."

"He is sixteen years younger," she said, tremulously. "You see what a child I was, Edward."

"So young, and yet so corrupt!" he exclaimed, bitterly.

She did not make a motion, or look away from his angry fiery eyes, but at his words her breath deepened to a faint moan.

There was a knock at the door, and Ellen



entered with the wine for which she had been sent. Setting it down near her mistress, she obeyed a mute gesture and went out again. Marian reached, with difficulty, and filled herself a glass, her husband sitting passive, and allowing her to wait on herself. Then she drew her shawl about her, clasped her hands with what seemed to be a silent prayer, and began her story.

"I was a very impulsive headstrong girl," she said, "and the surest way to make me do a thing was by using means to coerce me into not doing it. I would listen to reason, or to persuasion, but force I resisted. There was the root of all the misery that followed. My mother was unwise, and—well, she was sometimes hard. But poor mother had suffered till she was embittered. Let her rest now in her grave.

"There was a family who have been the bane of ours. You have heard of the Wisnors, and I need not tell you of the scandal about that woman and my father. But then I did not know it. My mother had kept all knowledge of it, as far as possible, from her children; but I knew that she hated them with a bitter hatred, and, with childish presumption, I thought that she was wrong.

"Mrs. Wisnor had one son, Clark, a handsome talented boy, one year older than I. We went to the same school, and we were fond of each other. My mother found it out, and instead of taking a right course, she took the worst possible one. Without giving me any reason for the prohibition, she forbade me ever speaking to Clark Wisnor again, and, getting in a passion, called him a low fellow, and a scamp. I knew then, as I know now, that she did him injustice. He had not high principles, he showed that afterwards, but he was one who, with proper training, might have made a very respectable man, as the world goes.

"Of course, such violent opposition could have but one effect. Clark and I fancied that we were two persecuted lovers, and that we could not do without each other. All the foolish notions of youth, fed by novel-reading, and excited by this unwise violence, were stimulated to sudden and unhealthy growth. Mrs. Wisnor had always favored our being together, and, though I had never before stepped inside her doors after my mother's prohibition, Clark and I used to meet there. I fancied, too, that my father was not averse to such

a companionship, since I had seen him go to Mrs. Wisnor's, and since he was always silent when my mother sneered about the family.

"It was Mrs. Wisnor who first spoke of marriage to Clark and I. I now understand that she thought thus to revenge herself on my mother for her scorn, but then she seemed to me an angel of love and help. She said that, Clark and I once married, all opposition would cease, and we would be forgiven. The idea delighted both of us. It seemed so romantic. We fancied ourselves hero and heroine. Our vanity was all in a flame. It seemed to me such a fine thing to be a wife at fifteen years of age, and Clark was equally proud of being a husband at sixteen.

"Well, that bad woman carried out her design. She did not dare to get a minister, or any justice whom we knew; but she had an acquaintance a few miles distant whom she employed. He was a justice, and, being under some obligation to her, would perform the ceremony for us. He did perform it, and I think that both Clark and I were frightened, and would have retreated at the last moment, if his mother had not encouraged and urged us on.

"We went home trembling, and for three months kept our secret, not daring to declare it. Indeed, Mrs. Wisnor seemed in no haste to have us do so, and told us to wait till she should think that the right time had come.

"An accident discovered the whole to my mother, and never shall I forget that day! There had been a convention in a neighboring town, and my father and mother went. I took advantage of their absence to spend the day at Mrs. Wisnor's. The day passed pleasantly enough, though I was conscious of a feeling of trouble and dissatisfaction. Some way the romance of my situation seemed to have gone, and I was troubled with the remembrance of the deceit which I had practised, and must yet practise. I was disenchanted, too, with Clark, but without being able to tell why. I suppose that I was made for truth, and could not long be pleased with the persons or circumstances which had entangled me in falsehood.

"While we three sat there that evening, there was a sound of heavy steps up the walk. Clark and I ran into a little side room off the parlor where we had been, and

Mrs. Wisnor waited to see who was coming. There was no ring at the doorbell, and no delay, but the outside door was flung open, and the steps came through the hall. The door of the parlor was as unceremoniously burst open, and there stood my father and mother! Ah, my God! my God!" moaned Marian Philips, covering her face. "I was wrong, but what have I not suffered! At that moment I would gladly have died. All the romance and folly that had before assured me were gone, and I felt only shame and terror.

"My father tore me from Clark, who would have protected me, and flung me against my mother. I thought he would kill Clark, and, indeed, Clark's mother too. His rage was far greater than my mother's, and from that night he never would notice Mrs. Wisnor, except to threaten her.

"I was carried home more dead than alive, and made to confess everything. I was told that my marriage had not been a legal one, the justice's commission having expired a week before he performed the ceremony, and never having been renewed.

"My father carried things with a high hand. He made Clark leave the State, threatening to have him arrested if he saw him there, or if he ever heard of his divulging any of that most disgraceful transaction. Indeed, he threatened to have Clark's life if he ever caught him again. The whole affair was kept a secret, Mrs. Wisnor having managed so artfully, and there was no danger of her telling, since she feared for herself as well as her son.

"There was one thing I did not know then; and no one but my father, and mother, and Mrs. Lennon ever knew. I was a mother. In a little more than eight months the child was born. No one suspected. I had been concealed for three months, every one supposing that I was away; and, as soon as I was able to be moved, I did come away. I thought that the child died. My mother told me it did. But Mrs. Lennon left it where the Hazeltines found it. I never knew that Frank was my own child, till my mother told me just before she died. She would not have told me, but was afraid that he and Lily were taking a fancy to each other. If I had known that I had a living child, I would never have married you.

"Well, when I came here on that first visit to my aunt, I met you. The last few

months had matured me, and I was a woman, though with, at the same time, a great deal of childish inexperience. I loved you. I knew then first what love is, and I knew what misery is also. I thought that I had felt it before, but I had not. You know that I denied you, that I was capricious, inconsistent. You can understand why. It was a hard struggle, but I resolved that, as I was not worthy of you, I would not marry you.

"My mother combated this resolution. She argued that I had been led astray, and had been weak and foolish, but not criminal. I will not, I cannot tell all that occurred. I yielded to her and to my own heart. But even till the last moment I was tempted to retract. The evening before we were married, you remember, as you stood saying good-night to me on the veranda, and praising me as your flower of life, I had an impulse to throw myself at your feet and tell you all. I wish that I had! O, I wish that I had! But I did not dare. When you were gone, I went up to my mother to entreat her to let me give you up, or tell you all, but she stopped me. She said that it was too late. It would be disgrace, and it would kill her. I believe that it would have killed her. Poor mother, she did wrong, but she did not mean all the wrong she did. She was blinded and warped by her own sufferings."

Marian stopped a moment to take breath, and, for the first time during her recital, looked at her husband. He had been listening with an interest so intense, that his breath seemed to have been suspended, and, after the first part of her story was told, his face assumed a pallor that was frightful. One fear had run through his listening, a fear so sharp that, if verified, it was almost enough to unsettle his reason. Now, when she paused, he gave the fear voice.

"Marian," he said, sharply, as when one speaks in pain, "was that marriage a legal one?"

"No," she said, quickly, "it was not. My parents were sincere. But, after I had been married to you a few months, Mrs. Wisnor made my mother believe that it had been legal. Mother did not dare to make inquiries at first, but before she died she found out that she had been right, and that the man who married Clark and me was not legally a justice. But she suffered dreadfully till she did find it out, thinking that I

was not your wife. She was trying to write me that it was all right when she died, but could not finish. But from what she wrote I got a clue, and found out all. While settling up her affairs, I could make inquiries without attracting suspicion. Mother thought that I had never heard Mrs. Wisnor's story, but feared that I might. But I had heard it. A note was brought me from that woman a few minutes after you left me on that last day that I was in the house. She feared that I was too happy," Marian said, with a slight touch of bitterness. "But I was too much stunned to feel the blow."

"Does she not even suspect that there was a child?" asked Mr. Philips, eagerly.

"No, she does not. If she had dreamed of it, she would have tormented me long ago. I answered her note after my mother died, and I think I silenced her. She had thought to frighten me, but she mistook. I threatened her with exposure, and since she is anxious to obtain a position, she would do anything to avoid a disclosure that would put her quite out of society. Such a story, while it would make people gossip, would be no disgrace to me"

Saying this, Mrs. Philips rose with an air of mournful pride, and seated herself on the sofa where she had been reclining. With the recital of her history, and the remembrance of her blighted life, some sense of wrong had arisen. Since her childhood, almost, she had known not one day of unalloyed peace. She felt that she had been punished enough.

"I do not accuse myself of any great sin in that foolish marriage," she said. "It was folly, and that was all. The crime was with the woman who urged me on, and the fatal fault was in my mother's injudicious discipline. I was too young to judge. But what I do accuse myself of is that I allowed you to marry me. I was still too young, and I loved you. But had I been ten, or even five years older, I would not have done it. It was base. I have known that it was base all these years that we have lived together, and the consciousness of the deception I was practising has made what would have otherwise been my delight, my deepest curse. Your love and trust were a crown of thorns to me. I have sinned, but it seems to me that I have expiated.

"I may have been very wrong in going away as I did; but I only took you at your word. You said that you had no wife, and

I thought that you meant it. I still thought that you would wish to save appearances, and for that I lingered as long at my mother's as I could. But human nature could not endure the agony I suffered. I could, at least, rid myself of suspicion, by at once severing the tie that bound us. I was wild, but I could not have borne to wait any longer."

Mr. Philips got up and walked two or three times across the room, and then came and took a seat by his wife, taking her hand in his.

"Why did not you tell me the truth then, Marian?" he asked.

She thrilled and trembled at the earnest kindness in his deep tones.

"Having been, in everything but this one, so true to you, having loved you so entirely, I could not realize that you would believe me so fallen, and I thought that it would be harder for you to believe that I had deceived you from the first, than that I had forgotten myself afterward. But I meant to tell you sometime. I had written, while I was in New Orleans, the whole story, and was dreading to send it, when you came. I thought that I could better bear to write than to tell you, and that I should feel less agitation, and so make the matter clearer.

"I could not bear to think," she said, her voice faltering; then, as he drew her tenderly into his arms, she sobbed out on his bosom, "I could not bear to think that you would doubt every word or act of love of mine, since I had first met you, that you would believe me to have been designing and an actress, even while scarcely more than a child. I pleased, or at least, comforted myself with the thought that you would look back upon our early union with pleasure, that you would say, 'she was true and pure then.' But it breaks my heart to have lost your confidence!"

"My darling wife!" the husband said, drawing her closely, and kissing her hair, "I never trusted you more than I do now. You were wrong in some things, but so are we all. And few have suffered as cruelly as you have. I have been cruel to you, Marian. Forgive me!"

"I loved you before," she said, after a little while. "Do you want to make me worship you?"

"Yes," he said, smilingly. "I mean that for the future you shall have no

thought but to please me. Listen to some of the commands which I have to lay on you. First, you are to write a note, as soon as you feel able, telling Lily to come home to her mother. Second, you are to take another glass of wine. And over and above all, you are to throw off all care and doubt, and be happy again, happier than ever, and, at the same time, well and rosy."

"I am well now," said the wife, blushing as rosiely as a girl.

"That is well! Now I shall order dinner, and after dinner I am going out to bring in a visitor to see you."

"A visitor?" she asked.

"Yes, one who has the right to see you, Marian. It is better that we see Frank alone before we see him with the others."

"O Edward!"

"I do not wish to separate you from your son, Marian," he said, gravely. "Of course no one is to know that relationship but those who now know it, and whomever Frank may marry. But he is an old friend of yours, and, in my opinion, is likely to be a relative in another way. I think he is interested in Alice."

She only looked at him with her love-lighted eyes, but made no answer otherwise.

"Weddings will be the order of the day, I predict," he continued, smiling again. "Have you taken note of these hints about Fred and Lily, in Mrs. Allyn's letters?"

"I could not think of them; but I would like it to be so," she said.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"Hear the mellow marriage-bells,  
Golden bells!"

WE must acknowledge to a flagging of interest in our younger lovers, now that the elder ones are happily united.

Shall we describe the blushing timidity with which Lily, after the first rapture of meeting her parents, presented to them her cousin, who had something to tell them, she said? Shall we describe congratulations, and give an inventory of the trousseau? Every lady knows it by heart. We like best to recall how, all that time, the eyes of the

fond father turned ever from his lovely daughter, to the beautiful wife so nearly lost, so happily found.

"Mamma," Lily said, one day, "I have but one thing to wish for."

"Happy child!" was the smiling reply. "What may that one thing be?"

"I wish that Frank and Alice would marry. I fancy that they like each other, but Aunt Allyn seems to be in the way."

"Alice might do worse," Mrs. Phillips said, with some state of manner. "But you and I had best not interfere, Lily. Such things arrange themselves best."

Lily was quite right. Frank certainly began to show signs of interest in Miss Allyn. His first display of feeling was open and ardent. Miss Alice did not appear to notice, except by the faintest accession of frostiness to her manner. The young man took refuge in gayety, and, in turn, affected not to notice her coldness. Miss Allyn drew herself up with still greater stateliness, and an air of disdain. Disdain was not in the list of ignominies which Mr. Hazeltine had proposed to himself to bear. He flung up his handsome head and left her, apparently quite cured of his love.

"How it came, let doctors tell,  
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!  
Mag grew sick as he grew well,  
Ha, ha, the wooing o't!"

The end of the matter was a double wedding, and rejoicing without measure. The only strife was as to which should be called the lovelier bride.

Well, it was over, and they were gone. Fred and Lily to housekeeping, and Frank and his wife to Mr. Hazeltine's.

"I shall miss Lily," Marian said to her husband. "But she is near, and I can see her often. Besides, I need only you. The rest is a pleasure, but not a necessity."

He stroked her hair softly, and only answered with his eye. She held the caressing hand, and bowed her cheek upon it.

"Nor life nor death are wholly drear,  
O tender heart, since you are here!"

she whispered, with a sigh of perfect content.

## **MARRYING A COUNT.**

**BY MRS. MARY A. DENISON.**

"**MARRY** her? no, not for worlds! There was a time when I might have done so, but never now!"

"You know, I presume, the circumstances under which she appeared before the public—that such a life is repugnant to her. Her father failed and suddenly died; her mother was—"

"Yes, yes, I know," repeated his companion, impatiently. "Let us go from here. I tell you it was inexcusable in her. There were enough ways in which she might have earned an honorable living but this!"

"Don't say it is dishonorable for a woman to use her glorious gifts in a public manner; imprudent, it may be, as some think of women, but—"

"Yes, I say it again. One cannot be in such a situation and preserve inviolate the beautiful purity that makes women but little lower than the angels. Miss O'Neil has forfeited my respect—"

Just then came so clear, heavenly, musical a strain, that the fault-finder paused involuntarily to hear, suspending his judgment for a moment. At the close, a magnificent bouquet, amid whose bright colors could be seen the flashing links of some

costly gift, either bracelet or necklace, fell at her feet. The man who had just spoken in severe tones, ground his teeth together at this sight, and his eyes turned towards one of the boxes, where sat a young man exceedingly fragile in appearance, but pre-eminently handsome.

A title and great beauty hardly compensated for a permanent deformity. The young count was deformed in one of his limbs—he was lame. He was the soul of honor, and had been tenderly brought up by one of the best and noblest of mothers; and, in a few words, he loved the sweet American singer, whose beautiful strains and pale intellectual face had charmed all the lookers-on in Venice.

It was in this fair city that Florence O'Neil had sojourned for some months past. The beginning of her career as a singer had dated only the year previous, when, discouraged and heart-sick, she knew not which way to turn in order to support her invalid mother.

There had been death in the house, preceded by a harsher sorrow to him who was now in the grave; failure—disgrace! There had been a red flag in the window; thought-

less crowds to see the rich furniture sacrificed; loud laughter in the once happy home. Then had come removal, sickness, the pall, the tomb.

For a time, teaching and sewing provided the resources with which they maintained themselves, but the health of Florence began to fail. Too constant application was ruinous both to her nerves and her mind.

One day she dressed herself plainly, took a roll of music in her hand, and composedly wended her way to one of the masters of sweet sounds. The professor was at home, seated in a magnificent saloon in which he received callers. He arose, as Florence threw aside her veil, charmed with her sweet face.

"I want you to hear me sing; I want you to pass judgment on my voice," was all she said.

The professor smiled, twirled his admirable whiskers, bowed with faultless grace, and led the way to his grand piano. He was doubtless amused with her *naïveté*, and prepared to see murder done to music. How was he enchanted, when, smoothing out a difficult aria, she ran through the prelude with light fingers, her gloves still on, and then, in sweet entrancing clearness, a most musical volume of sound rolled out.

"Upon my sacred honor, you astonish me, madam," he said, forgetting to twirl his whiskers. "You need but little instruction. But you had a motive for calling on me."

"Yes sir," said Florence, as calmly as she had played and sung. "My father is dead, my mother is sick, my sisters are younger than myself, and want educating. In a word—can I supply the place that death has left vacant?"

"You have a glorious voice, but what is that without friends, interest?"

He stood and mused a moment, then going towards a pile of music, he selected several gems, and, sitting himself down to the piano, wished her to sing them. She triumphed.

"Admirable, most admirable, young miss. Will you put yourself under my training for one month?"

"Gladly, sir. What are your terms?"

"You shall know at the end of that time. They will be reasonable, I assure."

"My first trial to-night, mother. How do I look?"

"O Florence, so beautiful!" cried Kate, a girl of fifteen. "It seems like old times, to see you dressed in that manner."

"I might show you an empty purse," said Florence, gravely.

"O, you'll fill it before long. I predict for you a splendid fortune. Mother and I were talking about it to-day; and although she laughed at my wild notions, they pleased her. I said you would travel with her and with me,—we could leave sis with Aunt Mary, you know. You are to go to Europe; a count is to fall in love with you, and what a lady you'll be!"

"Did you forget Willis, Kitty?" asked Florence, blushing a little.

"You *know* I never liked him!" exclaimed Kate. "The great haughty thing, with his black eyes looking a body through. I do believe when he comes home and finds our circumstances so much changed, he won't speak to one of us."

"You are harsh, Kitty," said Florence, dreamily, smiling to herself, as though her thoughts were far away. "You were his favorite, you know." And she arranged to her satisfaction a pendant of pearls that a friend had insisted she should wear.

"His favorite! he *never* liked me; and I don't know but his *love* would be all a pretence, any way; he—"

"Kitty," exclaimed Florence, with a stern voice and manner.

"Well, you may think so or not; I tell you," said little Kate, her face very much flushed, "I tell you he won't presume to notice you, when he hears that you sing in public."

"Do you believe *that* of him?" asked Florence, turning again to her younger sister, in whose judgment she had great confidence.

"I do, sis; just that."

Florence sighed. The very implied doubt made her sigh, though she could not believe it of him. He had won her young pure heart, and she had chosen to believe him all that mortal man could be—all that was noblest and best.

"Well," she said, slowly, "it may be so; and perhaps if he were here to counsel me—"

"I'm glad he isn't," said Kitty, half-petishly. "I *always* wanted you to sing in public, when you used to call forth so much admiration in papa's parlors. 'She is so self-possessed,' I thought, 'and the tones

come so naturally, as if she could not help singing, if she would!" It might have been vain and foolish, but that's the way I felt."

"Thank you, my dear sister. I have, in you, one ardent friend and admirer, at least. If I succeed in winning the golden opinions of—"

"That count!" exclaimed Kitty.

"Nonsense, Kitty, I wouldn't look at a count."

"Nor I, either, unless he was better than most men, of course. The title won't make a bit of difference to you; but it will make an immense one to our friends, and some of them have treated us so shabbily that I long to take them down."

"A poor motive, Kitty."

"Can't help it. Hark! the carriage. I am ready, are you? There will be—there must be a crowd! Such bills, such beautiful notices! Come."

Together the sisters entered the carriage, and were whirled to the music hall.

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"A triumph!" So said Professor Wells, as he entered the ante-room a moment after the weary artiste had left the platform.

"O, do you think so? Thank you!" replied the young girl, taking courage from the shining eyes and brilliant smile of her friend.

"Ad-mi-ra-ble!" cried the professor, again, smiting his hands together. "Several friends of mine wish the honor of an introduction," he added. "May they come?"

"Certainly," said Florence, after a little hesitation. She was somewhat confused by the novelty of her situation.

They came in a crowd. Distinguished amateurs, judges of music, editors, dabblers, lawyers, everything. Florence did well. She called up her self-command, and not in vain. Everybody was enchanted with her.

A week later, Professor Wells, who never before had seen the woman he could love, proposed to Florence. He loved now, it was evident, as few men do love. It pained the heart of the noble girl to refuse such a man, but her love was not in her own keeping; another held the key to her heart. She told him so, and he was generous.

"I never thought I should behold such glory!" cried Kate, bounding into the room where sat her mother and sister. It was a pretty, tasteful apartment, furnished with

hangings of a pale rose-color. "Come and look at the western sky. Such gold and amber!"

"Can't just now, Kitty dear," said Florence. "My headdress did not suit me, and I have taken it to pieces. I will come with you in a few moments."

Kate bounded out on the Venetian balcony, then back again, all smiles and excitement.

"O Flory, guess, guess whom I've seen just now!"

Florence paused from her work; her fingers trembled—she gazed askingly in the face of her sister.

"Frank Willis! He came in a beautiful gondola, and got out at the hotel. I didn't see his face, but it was he."

"Silly girl!" said Florence, taking up her work again.

"I tell you it was he; I felt it was, to my very fingers' ends."

"Kitty, my love!" said her mother, astonished.

"Yes I did—felt his coldness, egotism, his intensely selfish haughtiness, as if I had been a magnet."

"Does he know that I am here? has he followed me?" thought Florence. "You should not talk in that way of any person, dear sister," she said, aloud, noting Kitty's flushed cheeks.

"I tell you I can't help it. I don't like Frank Willis, and never did. Well, thank Heaven! we're rich now; almost as rich as we were before father failed, are we not, Flory?"

"Yes, dear."

"O, what a fine thing it is to have so charming a voice! Your bank is in your throat, sis, isn't it? Well, Mr. Frank Willis shan't have the pleasure of cutting me, I can tell him. Just the first opportunity I get, I am going to pass by him as grandly—so—and not a bow nor a word will I give his lordship. O Flory, I forgot to tell you! That bouquet, Clarinda says, came from Count Orwell. She says he is a beautiful poet, and his pleasure grounds are magnificent. How I should like to see them! Do you suppose he will ever invite us there?"

"Maybe," said Florence, listlessly.

"Maybe!" You're mighty quiet about it. I would give the world to go!"

"Wait till you have it to give," said Florence, smilingly.

That night Frank Willis heard the new prima donna, and when spoken to in regard to his previous intimacy in her family, he had declared, with the indignant tone and manner of one who feels himself in some way wronged, that once he should have felt honored by Miss O'Neill's regard, but now he would not marry her for worlds.

Florence saw him, and he little knew, as the wonderful tones thrilled even his proud heart, that never before had she sung in such angelic strains; that the great efforts put forth were in consequence of his presence.

With palpitating heart she entered the ante-room during the first intermission. She felt certain that he would hasten there to greet her. A door opened, she started nervously; it was the supremely handsome Count Orwell. Florence was disappointed; her demeanor was constrained, though she thanked him for his magnificent gift. The count was very polite, very sad. His manner was most delicate.

"The signorita is not ill, I hope," he said, anxiously, when the silence grew awkward.

"I—I beg pardon! I am not myself to-night—at least, I do not feel as well as usual."

"The signorita never sang more superbly," returned the count.

She raised her eyes, and let them fall again, in confusion. The expression of that beautiful face was that of adoration. Hitherto she had looked upon him as a friend—she could do so no longer. Her heart beat tumultuously, but with surprise, not passion. She had no time, however, to analyze her feelings. The orchestra struck up; the count led her to the door. He did not presume—he did not even press her hand. Florence was conscious of a thrill of pity, as she felt the uneven motion of his gait, but she was forced to admire him.

She looked around for Frank Willis; he was not there—had not even paid her the compliment of listening to the close. Her cheek burned, her lip curled. The result was that she sang gloriously. Her pride came to her aid, though her lip quivered more than once with strong feeling. She had loved Frank Willis.

"I told you so!" cried little Kitty, radiant in blue silk and pearls. "I knew how it would be with that Frank Willis. I overheard him say—"

"Don't! don't!" cried Florence, in tones of anguish.

"Why, Flory, what have I done? You are faint; you exerted yourself too much this evening!"

She had flown to the side of her sister. Florence sat, her rich attire gleaming in the subdued light, her hands clasped to her face. Tears were streaming through her fingers; her frame shook with sobs.

"Sister, sister, *did* you love him?" Kitty knelt at her sister's feet, her arms were laid caressingly around her.

"Never mind, Kitty; don't ask any questions, dear." And Florence wiped her streaming eyes, kissed her sister good-night, and quietly prepared for rest. Not so Kitty. For more than an hour she paced the floor, hot resentment in her heart against the man who had thus unfeelingly slighted, if not insulted them. More than once, as she passed the table at which her sister had sat, her eye fell on a delicately-tinted note which her sister had left there. She wondered if it was from Willis, and going nearer, scanned the superscription.

"I am sure," she said to herself, "that is Count Orwell's handwriting. I wish he would love her, and she would love him. O, what a grand match it would be! I should glory in it; for as a man, he is mentally, if not morally, superior to Frank Willis, and it would be a triumph to wed such a man!"

The next evening Florence appeared, serene and gentle as ever, at a party given by the American consul. She was talking with the wife of a celebrated author, when the latter smiled, bowed and beckoned, saying, "Come here; I want to introduce you."

Frank Willis came forward, and with much grace was presented to the sweet singer.

"A countrywoman of yours," added the lady.

Florence smiled quietly. Frank Willis lost his usual composure, as he replied that they had met before; and striving to place himself at ease, he offered his arm to Florence for a promenade. Their conversation was very brief, but on her part, spirited. She began again to dazzle the man; his heart failed him; he dared not recall the past; his pride battled with his tenderness; he cast sly glances about him.

"Perhaps you would prefer not to promenade longer with an opera-singer," said



Florence, sarcasm velling her voice. "I should wish to be seated."

He led her to a chair, agitated, trembling from head to foot. Never had she appeared so charming, so irresistible. He felt that he had acted ungenerously, meanly, and consternation painted his features when he saw Florence in intimate conversation with Count Orwell.

"A match, they say," said a friend, pointing them out.

"Nonsense," muttered Willis, to himself; "what a fool I am making of myself! And yet I know I could carry off the palm; for if ever woman loved man, I am sure that she loved me."

He watched the count narrowly. Jealousy crept into his heart. "She is mine!" he said to himself, fiercely. "She shall be mine. Fool, dolt that I was, to act as I have acted! I might have known that, with her superior character, she never would have become common."

The old love had come back, asserting its power preeminently. That night there was an offer made of heart, hand and fortune, to Florence O'Neil. The young girl smiled sadly, as, looking Frank Willis in the face, she referred her decision to the following evening.

"Did you see Frank Willis?" was Kitty's first question.

"Yes; he is coming here to-night."

"I dare say; when he finds you popular; noticed by great men; admired for your goodness and dignity, as well as your voice, he can condescend to call. Well, all I can

say, is, I shall be very happy to—be out of his way."

She was out of his way; Florence received him alone. He hoped his ungentlemanly conduct had been forgotten or overlooked, and renewed his proposals.

"Here is my answer," said Florence, with dignity, taking a folded paper from the table. "It is a copy of a note I sent Count Orwell this afternoon."

He read it with blanched cheeks. His fingers trembled convulsively.

"You forget," he said—and his words were scarcely audible—"our former relations; you forget—"

"I do not forget your slighting behaviour toward me when you first arrived here, Mr. Willis," said Florence, coldly. "I had a right to expect civility, or at least, recognition. However, the past is gone forever. What I have done, I have done understandingly. My hand is pledged to a worthy and noble man, noble not in title alone, but in every sense of the word. Go and forget me, as I shall forget you. Good-night, Mr. Willis."

Thoroughly humbled and crest-fallen, yet jealous and angry, Frank Willis left the room, cursing himself, Florence, the world and his fate. Early the next morning, he hurried from the city, ashamed to look again upon the faces of any he might meet.

"Mother, the prophecy is fulfilled!" exclaimed Kitty, when she heard the news; "and I'm going to have a countess for my sister. Wont *they* be astonished?"

*They* were astonished.

## MISS ANDERSON'S RIGHT HAND.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

[CONCLUDED.]

### CHAPTER XV.

You might have heard a pin drop in that crowded courtroom there in D—, on that pleasant September morning when the opening evidence for the government was introduced, and the trial of Charlie Creyton for murder commenced. Doctor Brown was not far from right. The gallery, and even the floor, was crowded with listeners from Cranstown. One after another the witnesses came forward, and link by link the chain of evidence was forged, startling even the most prejudiced by its apparently indisputable strength.

John Ward had seen Charlie Creyton cross the field, back of the highway, and take the track toward the lake and the hermit's cabin, just after twilight. He could swear to his statement without the first wavering of doubt.

Michael Dunnovan and James Griggs testified that they were hurrying toward the cabin, having been the first men sent thither by Wilson and Briggs after their discovery of the murder, and that, coming through Farmer Grey's wood lot, they almost ran over Charlie Creyton, who was going away from, instead of taking the road toward, the cabin. Close cross-questioning elicited only that while both had the impression that some one was with him, neither was willing to take an oath to that effect. The circumstance had not made any impression upon them at the time, because the lake was a favorite resort of the young people, especially on moonlight evenings; only upon the arrest of the prisoner did the incident take significance. Then came a hired workman from the shop, to tell of his calling the prisoner's attention the next morning to a small twig of oak leaves curiously twisted around the button of the skirt of the prisoner's coat, as though he had forced his way violently through close-matted shrubbery, and wrenched it from the branch. He noticed at the time his employer's look of annoyance and confusion, as well as afterward his

keen interest in the account of the meagreness of the clues discovered by which to identify the unknown assassin.

There was a little sparring between the counsel for the prisoner and that of the prosecution, and then the testimony went on, the examination of the witnesses was resumed.

Poor Ben White was put upon the stand. He cast one glance of anguished entreaty for forgiveness toward the grave pale face rising over the prisoner's box, and then lowered his eyes, and never raised them again, until he was called to look at the pistol, and identify it. The poor fellow did his best to say barely the truth, but he knew when he sat down, amidst a low murmur, that his evidence had been most damaging, thus far, of any introduced.

The counsel for the prisoner made an effort to confuse him, but at an earnest gesture from the prisoner, desisted.

On the second day, the evidence for the government was concluded, by the proving of the finding of the gold and the pistol; the teller of the Walchester bank having already given in his testimony concerning the payment of just such coin to a man whose peculiar dress and appearance made easy identification of the hermit.

If the courtroom had been filled before, it was packed now to its utmost capability. There was a dead ominous pause when the announcement was made that the testimony for the defendant could now be introduced.

The prisoner's lawyer, nervous and anxious, gave a swift inquiring glance toward his client.

For the first time, Charlie Creyton's courage seemed to waver. He gave a searching glance over the sea of faces; found many familiar ones — his mother's, Doctor Brown's, and even Miss Anderson, but not the face he sought.

The lawyer, who had at last received his whole confidence, bent down to him.

"Is he here? What shall I do?"

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"Anything to make delay, to gain time," whispered Charlie's white lips. "God grant I have not been deceived."

And so witnesses were brought forward to prove the hitherto irreproachable character of the accused, and among them, his mother.

Never had Mary Creyton looked so calm and grand, as now that she advanced toward the stand. Her face was pale, but composed and sweetly tranquil, and there was a soft shining light in her eye, which was new, even to her son. Her hands were folded across a small book, which was pressed tightly against her breast. She was conscious that the first words falling from her lips would send a thrill from the prisoner's box to the most distant seat in the gallery. Not even the lawyer, nor her son, was aware of the deep significance of the revelation; and she knew, likewise, that now was come to her the long, long delayed acquittal, the proud refutation of the disgrace she had endured so patiently. No wonder there was that high solemn look on her face.

From her cushioned seat near the gallery door, Miss Anderson saw and read that expression, and there went a cold steely gleam across her eyes, and she set her white teeth into the crimson lip, with savage determination, muttering under her breath:

"I will fight her down. I will deny it to the last!"

"Mary Creyton!" called the crier.

The slender modest figure in its black dress, with its calm uplifted face, moved to the stand, and was sworn.

"Please your honor," began the clear unfaltering voice, "let me begin with the truth. My name is Mary Creyton Livingstone."

There was a dead silence, in which was heard the rustle of some lady's silken dress from the gallery, then a low murmur rose, and swelled louder.

"Will you make your statement again?"

"My name is Mary Creyton Livingstone!"

"It is a lie!" came in a deep hoarse voice of concentrated rage and desperation from the gallery.

Doctor Brown laid his warning hand on Miss Anderson's shoulder, and whispered:

"I told you this was no place for you. I will not answer for any excitement."

She gasped once or twice, and sat down again.

The counsel for the government rose.

"Will the witness please to state how she obtained such a name, when she is known in all her native town as an unmarried woman, bearing her maiden name of Creyton?"

"My name was Mary Creyton, until twenty-two years ago this coming month, I was married at B—— to George Livingstone, the nephew of Edward Livingstone of Cranstown."

The faces of the Cranstown people were every one worthy an artist's study.

The lawyer for the defence brightened, stooped down, and asked something in a low voice.

"If your honor desires proof, Mrs. Livingstone has her marriage certificate with her," he said the next moment.

The priceless document passed from Mary's hands up to the bench. While the judge was reading it aloud, the mother turned toward her son with a glad heart-thrilling smile.

Charlie had risen instinctively, grasping at the rails of the box, and never stirring his eyes from the judge's face.

"The certificate has certainly the appearance of being genuine. Proof can readily be obtained, since the reverend gentleman whose name is signed to it, is still alive, and only a few miles from us, if there is any question called concerning it," said the judge.

Miss Anderson had been rapidly pencilling a few lines on a card she took from her pocket-case. Mr. Atherton made his way out of the gallery, through the crowd, down into the packed assemblage below, and presently handed the card to the prosecuting lawyer.

He read it, and announced that the sole surviving relative of George Livingstone denounced the assertion as an infamous attempt at imposture, declaring her intention to contest the matter to the extent of the law.

Mr. Atherton's persistent efforts to clear a way to the front had made room for another person, a man wrapped in a long thin cloak, with a hat pressed down closely over his brows. This man quietly followed behind him, and at last made his way so close to Mary, that by reaching forward he could touch her elbow.

"Please your honor, does this question interfere with the further testimony of the witness?" asked the lawyer for the defence.

"It certainly will render her evidence

worthless, so it be proved she has spoken falsely here before us, after her solemn oath."

"It is not needed to delay for this trifle," said a deep voice, startling judge, jury, and most of all, the prisoner and witness. "The reverend gentleman is in the courtroom. Let him come forward."

Mary stepped aside, still with the calm heroic forgetfulness of the gazing eyes; and in the moment the clergyman, too well known not to be recognized by half the people there, came forward and corroborated her testimony. It was his first marriage, and all the particulars were written down in the yellow volume of the journal he brought with him.

Mary Creyton Livingstone was vindicated. Cranstown people looked at one another with rueful and crestfallen glances. Charlie was trying to hide the scalding tears pouring over his cheek, and only Doctor Brown perceived that Miss Anderson sat with hands clenched, and eyes burning like those of a tigress ready for a fatal spring.

"Let the testimony for the defendant go on," said the judge, when the long murmur of astonishment had somewhat subsided.

The stranger who had called for the clergyman put himself forward, made an expressive gesture, and passed a slip of paper along to the lawyer.

The latter opened it, flashed a triumphant glance toward the prisoner's box, and said, in a voice that vainly endeavored to be calm:

"I shall waive further testimony from that witness. There is but one other to bring forward, and his testimony I trust, will be found conclusive. I assure your honor, had he been at hand, he should have been brought forward in the commencement of the trial. My client is here arraigned at this bar on the grave charge of murder. I fear, indeed, from the testimony offered, there is scarcely a soul here but solemnly and sincerely believes in his guilt. But behold! I call for my next witness—the *Hermit of the Lake!*"

Well might these words occasion a profound stir throughout the crowded courtroom, and well might the low murmur of astonishment swell into a loud huzza, when the stranger, below Mary Creyton, threw off his hat and shrouding cloak, and stood up before them—the well-remembered figure with long gray locks, his venerable beard and dreamy face.

Coroner Bradley rubbed his eyes vigorously, and stared as if under the influence of a dream. The judge removed his glasses, polished them hastily, and took another sharp survey. Through it all, the hermit stood up there in the box of witnesses, exposed to all eyes, and the focus, certainly, of every glance in the room.

A second shout rose up, as Charlie Creyton turned his white grateful face toward him, and he looked up fearlessly to the jury. Through that shout came the low wild shriek of a woman's voice. It did not come from Mary Creyton, for she was standing there with clasped hands, trembling at last like a very aspen, unable to articulate a single syllable.

Doctor Brown knew whence it came, and he bent down toward the frozen-looking face beyond him, and touched Miss Anderson's shoulder. But she gave no response. She was bending forward, her whole vitality seeming to have passed into her eyes, which were burning luridly, and fixed upon that bold figure in the witness-box.

Order was restored with difficulty. The whole audience seemed swayed as by an irresistible wave of emotion. But at length quiet was enforced, and the voice of the judge himself could be heard.

"Swear this witness, and let him explain how and why we have been deceived into believing a murder had been accomplished."

"Please your worship, the fact of the murder still exists. Shall I give my testimony in my own words, or wait for your honor's questions?"

"Give the account to the point, if possible, but in your own statement. And first your name?"

"George Livingstone!" was the clear and prompt reply.

Another shout wilder than the first, and the low cry which mingled with it was not from Miss Anderson.

"George! George!" cried Mary Creyton's sobbing voice.

He turned upon her one yearning, overflowing glance of adoring love, but made a gentle deprecating gesture.

"There can be proof brought forward to substantiate my statement. There are half-a-dozen people in Cranstown who can identify the peculiar birthmark on my arm. If that is not sufficient, I can bring forward, in due time, ample proof from California, that I am that George Livingstone who went

forth from hence twenty-one years and more ago," said the new-comer, steadily turning his face again to the judge.

"But why have you remained concealed all this time? How dared you impose upon your native town that statement of your death in California?" demanded the counsel for the government, who was a native of Cranstown, and acquainted with all the facts.

"The statement did not come from me, nor through agency of mine," answered George Livingstone, steadily. "I will presently show you through whose nefarious agency all this has come about; but first let me ask you to hear the true account of the murder which occurred at the cabin by the lake. May I ask that the late prisoner be allowed to make his statement concerning what he knew and saw?"

The judge whispered a moment with the gentleman beside him, and nodded assent.

"Charles Creyton," said George Livingstone, "be pleased to tell us then where you were on the evening of that murder?"

"I was at the lake shore, but a short distance from the spot where the cross is now placed over the grave."

"You went thither for what purpose?"

"In answer to a mysterious promise you gave me on the day previous, to help me out of many threatening evils."

"You had a companion?"

"I did; the same promise was given to her. You gave us both the gold for whose fatal possession I had nearly lost my reputation, if not my life."

"The lady's name is unnecessary, since her illness prevents her immediate corroboration of this testimony. But where were you when the cry for help rang forth from the hermit's cabin?"

"Below the banks with the lady and yourself. We had kept silent for a few moments, because we had heard a boat come up to the landing some distance below us, and as the trees concealed from us who it was, we retreated ourselves out of sight. We heard the cry and the pistol-shot, and hardly knew what to do. But as we were hurrying out, a figure dashed past our hiding-place, and went down toward the landing. Although the moonlight was so bright, the bushes concealed from us the identity of the assassin. You seized me by the arm and exclaimed:

"That pistol-shot was intended for me.

I guess whose is the hand. Hasten to the cabin, and give what relief is possible, but I must follow the murderer, if murder has been done.' We went together, my companion and myself, and found a stranger lying there in the cabin, just breathing his last. We had hardly discovered this, when you came back. You told us that it was imperative for your safety that the murderer should believe the work completed. You gave us a hurried promise to protect us from all harm—extorted our sacred word to keep silence on what we had seen, gathered up all proof of your identity, and hurried us away from the cabin, just as we heard the footsteps of the woodmen brushing along through the bushes of the pasture. I was the more ready to yield to your guidance, because I was overwhelmed by finding the assassin's pistol, lying on the floor, to be the very weapon I had lost mysteriously from my shop the week before. You gave us a solemn promise to protect us from injurious result, again assured us you were the only one to help us from our difficulties, and led us by a safe and speedy pathway to the road."

"Precisely; there are three then to swear to the truth of that statement."

"But the man who was murdered, and the murderer, who are they?" demanded the bewildered lawyer.

"The man who was murdered was an acquaintance of mine, none too agreeable, I admit. He saw me as I was drawing my money that day at the bank, and followed me. He had motives of his own for coming from distant California to Cranstown, and insisted upon sharing my cabin for the night. Poor wretch, it was his death warrant. I left him stretched out on my bed to rest himself from his long tramp, and went to keep the appointment I had made with this young man and his companion. The moment I heard the cry and the pistol report, I knew what it meant. I had been all the time on my guard against a malignant and merciless enemy. The same one whose diabolical machinations drove me from my uncle's love and my rightful home. That one who would be most likely to suffer by my reappearance. More than that I need not say."

"And the name of the man who sleeps under the cross?"

"Julian Raymond was his name. I speak the truth, so hear me, Heaven!"

The words were scarcely uttered, when there rang out a terrible heart-freezing cry, that almost stopped the pulse of every heart present.

"No, no! it is false! It cannot be!"

"It is the truth. Heaven's truth!" answered George Livingstone, facing round toward the gallery. "Miserable woman! you murdered the father of your child, and you left the hated claimant to the Livingstone fortune safe, unharmed, ready to come forward thus in judgment against you."

Across the sea of pale, awestruck, horrified faces George Livingstone's eye flashed its accusing glance into the glazed stony orbs of Serena Anderson.

"Your plottings are ended, turned upon you in terrible retribution. My wife is cleared of all shade of blame, my son will go forth free, and honored, and I myself stand ready to prove my rightful claim to the estate you have so wrongfully withheld," he cried out in a stern accusing voice:

Miss Anderson stood there, the great lady of Cranstown, in the rich satin dress trailing behind her, the costly lace mantle, the elegant Parisian bonnet and scintillating diamond earrings, with a face that was like that of a fiend, in its white rage and baffled fury. Slowly the change came over it. Doctor Brown marked it well, and sprang toward her. The eyes gleamed red and lurid, the lips were drawn convulsively from the white teeth, a terrible look of horror, terror, inexpressible loathing, went over the whole countenance, and holding up her right hand, glittering as it was with its gemmed circlets, she shrieked:

"The evil one has done it. It is this hand, this terrible hand. Ray, Ray, where are you? Come to me. Do you not guess why I love you so? O Ray, Ray, you are my son. And now I can never marry your father and save you from the disgrace, because I have killed him. Julian, Julian, it was not I, it was the fiend, the terrible fiend in this right hand."

The tone had grown wilder, and the words came swifter. She ended with a burst of mad laughter, that rang for days afterward, in the ears of the shivering listeners.

Ray Dexter, only a little ways behind her, heard every word, and understood, as the dullest brain in the whole assembly could not fail of doing. He turned deadly pale, cast one sickening glance at the wild maniac

face, and dashed from the gallery, the courthouse, the very town itself.

Doctor Brown waved away the officers of the law, as they hurried toward the gallery.

"Leave her alone. God's judgment has dealt with her already. It is no sham. This has been coming on for months. I looked for it without this exposure. She is stark mad, and will never be a sane woman again, if, indeed, she has ever been of perfectly sound mind."

## CHAPTER XVI.

THERE was a perfect Babel outside the courtroom, when the prisoner came forth free, with his mother on his arm, and his triumphant father, at last recognized by many as the identical George Livingstone of Lakeville, following behind. The long gray locks of the hermit and the venerable beard were removed, and changed the character of his face.

Austin Bradley came up to Charlie, and held out his hand with a look of mingled shame and annoyance.

"I congratulate you, Mr. Charles Livingstone, from the bottom of my heart, upon this great and happy change in your fortunes, and beg you will bear me no illwill for my share in your prosecution."

"Certainly not, Mr. Bradley," replied Charlie, cheerfully, as he shook the offered hand; but it was quite another smile with which he turned to Doctor Brown, when the latter came back from seeing the unfortunate patient to safe lodgings.

"Doctor Brown, my mother has been telling me of your kindness, and I have heard from other sources of your generous defence when everything showed so darkly against me. And may I ask your opinion about Amy, my generous noble Amy?"

"It is all right now, my fine fellow. A few whispered words of what has happened here, such care as she will not fail of receiving, and a sight now and then of your happy face, and you may pack the doctor and his medicines off upon some other victim. Now I want a look at your father. We were wild lads together, and I ought to know him. Ha!" added he, as he saw the gray wig and beard dangling from the late hermit's hand, "so you have turned masquerader, George Livingstone!"

The latter held out his hand with a grave smile.

"I think my whole life has been a wild foolish masquerade, doctor. I am longing to come now into peace and quiet. I cannot even hold the bitter anger I have hitherto cherished toward that woman—"

"You can afford to be generous, even in your forgiveness of so great a wrong. You have your fortune back again; and let me tell you, if you think such a wife and such a son as those who will make your sweetest happiness, could ever have been reared amidst the luxurious and enervating scenes of Lakeville, you are vastly mistaken. Tried, purified by fire, they come to you with the stamp of genuine gold. But will you please look at the Cranstown people? Poor deluded gossipers! they hardly dare venture forward, though they are longing to offer incense at the new shrine. Are you going at once to Lakeville?"

"No. Even were there no legal formalities to be settled, I should prefer Creyton farm. I presume you will take her—Serena Anderson, I mean—back to Lakeville."

"No. She must go to the asylum. It is the only safe place for her. I have been looking for this, as I said before. You know she has been under my care for some time. Her madness will be furious and dangerous. My dear sir, you do well to put away your vindictive anger. Look at the case, and see if, in your wildest hate, you could have asked for more terrible retribution. Think of how she has queened it over these people; think how jealously she guarded that secret of Ray Dexter's birth, even from the lad himself, and then remember how there, before that crowded courtroom, she was so thoroughly and terribly exposed. No wonder her mind gave way at once. And even that anguish is nothing in comparison to this which she must continue to suffer; this frightful dread of her own right hand, which she believes to be changed to that of a torturing demon. Perhaps you have not been familiar with insanity, and do not understand how exquisite is the suffering of such a belief?"

"Heaven knows I would save the wretched woman from this doom, if it were possible," answered George Livingstone, earnestly. "How shall I be thankful enough that my own dear wife had a staff to lean upon through all her sore trials, so that

neither mind nor body gave way beneath the trial."

"Just so, just so!" echoed Doctor Brown, earnestly. "George Livingstone, I tell you that woman is a pearl of price. More than ever does it impress upon me my old theory, that a woman without religion is more worthless than a flower without perfume."

Half a dozen carriages, at least, were waiting at the service of the Livingstones to convey them to Cranstown. Charlie looked along the row, and with a quiet smile accepted the rather forlorn hired equipage of Ben White, who colored to the very roots of his hair with delight and gratification.

The arrival at Creyton farm, and that almost solemn meeting there in the privacy of home, was too sacred for common description.

There were many things still untold even, when Charlie rose, and began to look longingly toward the village. Mary Livingstone left her husband's side to whisper:

"Go and see how she is, Charlie dear. I caught a glimpse of Mr. Atherton's face, and if ever a man in the world was thoroughly humiliated and crestfallen, it is he. There is no question about your welcome now, from the master of the house, and for sweet faithful Amy's sake, we will forget how much we despise such summer friends."

Charlie kissed her tenderly, smiled back to his father's proud and happy glance, seized his hat, and dashed away.

"There is only one thing more," observed Mary, gently, as she came back to her husband's encircling arm. "I want the taxidermist to come, and rejoice in your restoration to life, and your rightful inheritance. It touched me deeply, George, to see how truly he loved you."

George Livingstone went to the hall, where hung the old gray cloak, and plunged his hands into the pockets, and came back laughing.

"I never thought I should need to explain that to you. The doctor was right. I have done little but masquerade. Mary dear, you may guess now how trying that interview was for me. But I had taken a solemn oath to reveal myself to none until I saw my way clear to the proofs against Serena Anderson."

While he spoke he fitted the jetty mustache to his lip, clapped an inky black wig

upon his head, and bowing, said, in the imperfect accents of Max Steinberg:

"My dear madam, I give you one joy from the depths of my heart, this be the happiest day of my life."

"George, George! how could I be so blind?" cried Mary, between her peals of laughter.

"Little wife, do you remember how coolly you sent me away from your window that night because you were alone and unprotected! Could I not have fallen down at your feet, and kissed the very dust beneath them! The doctor, that shrewd clear-sighted man, is right again. You are the pearl of women."

Charlie, meanwhile, with great bounds of exulting freedom, had gone dashing across the pasture toward the village. He answered the respectful greetings which met him everywhere, as he passed along, but paused for none, walking straight on toward the Atherton cottage.

His heart was brimming over with sweet and tender memories. That dark wretched morning before the justice in the lawyer's office, was still before his thoughts. He saw the pale, sweet, agonized face, and heard the wistful earnest voice:

"I have come to give my testimony. To save Charlie, or to share his fate."

His brave faithful darling! Sweetest of all this new happiness was the remembrance that she deserved all the reward he was at length able to give.

He walked up the avenue unhesitatingly, and laid his hand on the doorbell. But the door was noiselessly unclosed before him. Mrs. Atherton with a tremulous smile held out her hand. Charlie wrung it in silence. At the parlor door stood Graham Atherton. Never was there a face so thoroughly subdued, all its pompous importance wilted away. He stood there dumb, conscience-stricken, for once in his life conscious of the poor, mean, miserable part which he had acted.

It cost Charlie Livingstone a little struggle before he could advance, as he did, presently, with extended hand.

"Mr. Atherton, I hope you will agree with me, that it is wisest to leave bygones to be bygones. I have come here, not, I hope, without your approbation, to see my promised wife. Mrs. Atherton, will you let me have a single look at Amy? The doctor thought there was no harm, if I kept com-

posed, and gave my good news cautiously."

"Certainly, certainly! Show him up to Amy, Maria. I must say, Mr. Livingstone, this is generous and magnanimous," began Graham Atherton.

But Charlie turned hastily to the mother.

"Let us go on," said he, in a whisper.

And Mrs. Atherton led the way, and opening the chamber door, showed him the thin white face, with its dreamy listless eyes, resting amidst the pillows which filled the back of an easy-chair, into which they had raised her. The long silky hair was waving around her shoulders, and the weak thin hands were playing with it as a child might have done. The whole face was vague, indefinite, unfixed.

Doctor Brown sat in the chair before her, and the nurse waited in the shadow of the bed-curtains. They had counted on his coming, and were waiting anxiously the result of the experiment. Charlie's heart beat suffocatingly. He had hardly been prepared to find her so weak and changed, and yet had never yearned toward her in such passionate tenderness, as now that she lay there before him like a blighted drooping blossom.

Mrs. Atherton obeyed the doctor's significant glance, and coming forward, knelt down before the chair, and looked up into the listless eyes.

"Amy, darling, I have good news for you."

The girl turned her eyes slowly toward the trembling anxious speaker, with just the faintest possible shade of recognition flitting across her face.

"The trial is ended, Amy, and Charlie is safe!" continued the mother, clenching her hands to keep down the tremor of agitation from her voice.

A little quiver across the lips, a widening of the pupils of the eye at the name.

Mrs. Atherton saw it, and repeated it again.

"Charlie Creyton is cleared, Amy. The hermit came forward and saved him! Are you not glad for Charlie?"

The eyes grew troubled, the face lost its calm, and she broke into a little tempest of sobs and tears, taking her hands away from their feeble playing with the long brown tresses, and wringing them piteously, as she repeated, slowly:

"Charlie! O Charlie!"

Mrs. Atherton turned her frightened eyes toward the doctor, but he motioned for her



to continue, thankful to find that memory could be aroused at all.

"Charlie is safe, Amy, the trouble is all ended."

"Has he been hung, mother?" demanded Amy, in her own voice, her eye beaming suddenly with intelligence.

"No, no, Amy! he is safe!"

The doctor's authoritative voice brought Charlie forward. He fell down upon his knees, and caught both her hands, covering them with tears and kisses.

"Amy, my darling, my precious, precious Amy!" was all his agitated voice could articulate.

Amy sat a moment perfectly motionless, her eyes dilating, slowly taking in the meaning of his presence. Then there came a little cry of mingled joy and pain, and she fell forward into the arms he outstretched to receive her.

The doctor came forward, smiling triumphantly in the midst of their horror, as mother and lover looked wildly into the cold white face and closed eyes.

"The shock is over! the body has borne it, and the mind is safe. Help me take her to the bed, and let all be quiet as possible when she revives. As for you, young man, don't look so despairing; I tell you all the danger is past. Remain within call, and you shall hear her speak naturally, remembering everything that transpired before her illness. I tell you the crisis is safely over."

The worthy doctor was right. From that hour Amy Atherton improved steadily, and the day after the Livingstones took possession at Lakeville she was able to ride in the luxurious carriage which had once been so hateful to her eyes, sent especially that she might be the first to offer her congratulations.

Charlie drew her aside with tender care, selecting the easiest lounge in the peerless purple room, and calling her a fairy sprite who had stolen into the place of a Cleopatra.

"Rest quietly, Amy darling, if these cushions are easy, and I am going to entertain you with a pretty show."

As he spoke he brought forward sundry square packages, neatly enveloped in embossed paper, and tied with white satin ribbons. Some were tiny and small, and some were almost as large as a travelling trunk.

With that mischievous smile on his face,

Charlie's laughing fingers untied the dainty knots, and flung open the lace papers of the inner envelopes.

Here was a morning-dress of heaviest cashmere, rich with embroidery and knots of blue ribbon. There a party-dress of tulle, like a cloud stolen from some gorgeous sunset sky. Again a costly robe of silk or velvet. A case of wee satin slippers, box after box of gossamer handkerchiefs; endless trifles for the toilet, but all of the richest material and most dainty taste. Last of all, Charlie stumbled upon a huge paper box, and peeping beneath the cover, uttered a little shriek of delight.

"I shall never dare to touch it. Felice would annihilate me if I attempted it, but if you are good, Amy, you may have a peep," said he.

And as he spoke he brought the box forward. Amy caught a glimpse of a lace veil, fit for an Alpine nymph, crowned by a wreath of orange blossoms, a wavy row of triple lace flowers, rippling over the lustre of a white satin underskirt looped up by sprays of orange and glittering crystal pendants, and blushing deeply, turned away her eyes.

"Only one thing more, little one," said Charlie, swinging back the lid of a pearl and silver casket, and showing the brilliant scintillation of imprisoned diamonds.

Then he sank down on one knee before her, and his playful tone grew deep and earnest.

"They have just arrived, Amy, from the famous city artiste, the answer to Miss Anderson's order. Amy, my darling, they were intended to bribe your consent to a bridal at Lakeville. Will you take them, little Amy, from my hands, and come, only bribed by love, for love's sweet sake?"

I don't think Amy's answer could be recorded, nor am I certain Charlie Livingstone ever knew what it was. For while he still knelt, the little hand in his own, the fair head resting on his shoulder, there came a sharp cry outside the door.

It was in Mrs. Ewing's voice.

"O, the Lord save us! Have you heard the news that's come? Miss Anderson is dead."

"Dead? Miss Anderson dead?" ejaculated Felice, with a little French interjection of astonishment and horror.

"The Lord save us all! She got away from her keepers, ran out into the yard, as

if she knew just where to look, found an axe, and laid her hand down, her right hand, on the chopping-block, and cut it off! clean off! And then she laughed, and cried out, they said, in a terrible voice which they'll never forget, that now it was all right, she should have peace now. And so she has, for she bled to death before they could get her secured again."

George Livingstone and his wife came in presently to repeat the horrible story.

"It is better so," said George Livingstone, breaking a long and solemn silence. "Her sufferings, at least, are ended. Let us remember only the diseased mind, and drop a veil over her misdeeds and evil passions. I wish I could find that boy of hers, and lend him a helping hand."

But Ray Dexter was not so easily found. The terrible downfall, alike of his pride and magnificent prospects, changed his whole character. He who had been only a selfish idle dreamer, a luxurious enjoyer of enervating ease, was transformed into a sternly practical self-helping man. Cranstown was most abhorrent of all places in the world to his sensitive spirit, and it was several months after—in fact when Charlie and his Amy were on their bridal tour, that, in a distant city, they came across Ray Dexter.

He colored crimson as he recognized them, and made a desperate attempt to avoid them. But Charlie was not so easily baffled. He laid a firm hand on the young

man's shoulder there in the crowded street.

"Ray, my father is searching for you. I shall not let you escape me now. We must be friends, Ray, and you must allow us to give you what assistance lies in our power. Promise me that you will accept it."

The young man was deeply touched by this generosity, but still more impressed by the earnestness of the interest in his welfare. At first, all intercourse with them was extremely painful, but the time came when, established in a safe and prosperous business by the generous help from Lakeville, he was ready and glad to acknowledge them as near and dear friends.

It was by his order that, years afterward, when happily married, and in comfortable circumstances, he was able to trace back much of his improved character and worthy success to the darkest experience of his life; a simple stone was erected over the grave of Serena Anderson, bearing a design entirely mystical to a stranger, but thrillingly suggestive to all who knew the dark story of the life of the silent sleeper beneath.

Sculptured on the marble above the shield, bearing simply the name and age of the deceased, was a pair of exquisitely carved hands. The right was lying dismembered, severed at the wrist, but the left was pointing upwards. Beneath, these lines:

*"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee!"*